Unitaid Advocacy Meeting – Nairobi – April 2023
Unitaid Resource Mobilization Advocacy Meeting

Brief summary of event and preliminary discussions around next steps

1. About the event and participants

The first-ever Unitaid resource mobilization advocacy meeting took place 21–22 April 2023 in a hybrid format. The gathering was organized by the Communities and NGOs Delegations to the Unitaid Board, with support from the Unitaid Secretariat. Nearly 30 people from around the world participated in person in Nairobi, Kenya, with 10 others participating virtually for at least part of the meeting. Most participants were from the communities and civil society sector, including several members of the Unitaid Board’s Communities and NGOs Delegations and others proposed by the two delegations. Other in-person attendees included representatives from the Unitaid Secretariat.

The meeting had two **overarching objectives**: 

- strategizing on how to broaden the advocacy movement in support of resource mobilization for the introduction of new medicines, diagnostics and health products for HIV, TB, malaria and mother and child health (MCH) responses and Unitaid’s vital role in this process; and
- identifying opportunities and strategies for community-based organizations and other civil society groups, including networks of people living with and affected by HIV, TB and malaria, to be involved in all stages of designing and implementing relevant advocacy campaigns and activities in support of the organization and its work.

The two-day workshop consisted primarily of plenary sessions that included presentations and panel discussions, with substantial time devoted to questions and answers from in-person and virtual participants. **Discussion areas and topics** over the course of the meeting included the following:¹

- the basic history and structure of Unitaid, including the changes and evolution in its resourcing model;
- the current and anticipated near-term future financing landscape for the organization, including trends, challenges and opportunities;
- how and where civil society and communities have been engaged in Unitaid governance and advocacy to date, and the potential value and impact of increased community engagement;
- the obstacles and gaps that limit community engagement, and possible solutions to overcoming them; and
- ideas on messaging to help guide resource mobilization efforts.

¹ A more comprehensive report on the 21–22 April meeting includes greater detail about all aspects of the discussions, including many of the priority inputs from participants.
2. Next steps and actions

On 23 April, the workshop task team met to discuss planning and next steps, including the development of an action plan aimed at enabling and increasing advocacy by communities and civil society in support of resource mobilization in the short and medium terms. Participants made several preliminary decisions about how to proceed in different areas related to organization and guidance, priority advocacy action targets, and tools and materials, including those summarized below. Due to time and capacity constraints, no decisions were made or validated regarding timelines for many of the proposed action areas.

*Initiate formal discussions with the Global Fund Advocates Network (GFAN) to help create and launch a civil society-led movement in support of Unitaid, including around resource mobilization*

**Key actors responsible:** Communities and NGOs Delegation to the Board, Secretariat

**Relevant observations:** GFAN would be engaged initially on an interim basis, with funding for its work to be provided by the Secretariat.

**Activities involved:**
- GFAN to prepare a *pitch document* covering its proposed role. GFAN would review and revise this pitch first with the two Delegations before it is sent to the Secretariat for validation.
- In the meanwhile, GFAN would be in direct contact with the Secretariat about financing arrangements for this overall role, with the outcomes of that discussion then being brought to the Delegations for their consideration.

*Explore longer-term funding options for this civil society and community engagement and advocacy structure*

**Key actors responsible:** Secretariat, Communities and NGOs Delegation to the Board (working jointly)

**Relevant observations:** Possible partners might include the French 5% Initiative, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the *Avina Foundation*, a Brazilian NGO.

*Identify main targets for advocacy around resource mobilization*

**Key actors responsible:** Communities and NGOs Delegations to the Board, Secretariat, GFAN

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2 NOTE: This overview refers only to the discussions, observations and suggestions on 23 April. It therefore reflects a highly time-specific situation and context at which the first, initial steps in planning took place. Further decisions and actions taken after the task team meeting on 23 April are not referenced. Also, some of the focus was on activities and events that took place within days or weeks of the meeting itself, and thus they may no longer be relevant.

*Meeting convened by the Communities and NGO Delegation to the Unitaid Board with support from the Unitaid Secretariat.*
Relevant observations and initial decisions:

- A small group of targets should be selected, at least in the beginning, due to resource limitations. A preliminary list from discussions on 23 April included the following from the ‘priority donors’ category: Norway, Canada, Germany, United Kingdom, the European Commission, South Korea and Japan.
- The Delegations also agreed preliminarily on some low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) for movement-building and prioritized advocacy based on various factors such as demonstrated support for Unitaid and global health for all. These include: Kenya, Uganda, Brazil and either Senegal or Côte d’Ivoire.

Activities involved: The Delegations and Secretariat agreed to consider arranging virtual calls to further discuss the list of countries. GFAN would help lead such efforts.

Develop or make available a range of documents and tools to support and promote advocacy efforts

Key actors responsible: Secretariat, Communities and NGOs Delegations to the Board, GFAN

Suggested components of this overall action area (and actors):

- Introductory webinar aimed at providing basic information to bring people into the movement (Delegations, GFAN)
- ‘Unitaid 101’ training and information-sharing resource for new advocates (Communities and NGO Delegations to the Board, with support from the Secretariat)
  - Relevant observations: This should only be prepared after the corporate communications package is finalized, which likely means a target date of the fourth quarter of 2023.
- Simple, clear and concise documents and tools explaining Unitaid and its value proposition (Secretariat as the lead)
  - Relevant observations:
    - The following were proposed as priority options:
      - a briefing document situating Unitaid in the global health architecture,
      - targeted briefs per individual priority country that situate the institution in ways and language that make sense from the donors’ perspectives and realities, and
      - simple messages and assets for advocates to amplify
    - Suggested priority messaging in such materials would include ‘costs of inaction’ calculations. This would include both costs related to Unitaid-facilitated products and impacts to date (e.g., lower-priced cervical cancer tests, new paediatric ART regimens) and projected future costs – for example, without $1.5 billion, here is what the world will miss out on over the next five years.
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Guidance on private-sector engagement (Secretariat)

- **Relevant observations**: This could be a brief document (e.g., a two-pager) that discusses how the private sector can or should be engaged as Unitsaid donors or other kinds of partners.