



Unitaid Executive Board Meeting
38th Session
16-18 June 2021
Organised via teleconference

Agenda item 3

Minutes of the 37th Session of the Executive Board
9-10 December 2020

Organised via videoconference

For Information For Review and Advice For Approval

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
1. Opening remarks from the Chair	4
2. Agenda of the EB37 meeting	4
3. Minutes from previous meeting: EB35, 17-18 June 2020.....	4
4. Report from the Executive Director.....	4
5. Unitaid 2022-2026 Strategy : discussion on the outcomes of the PSC workshop and future strategic direction, including options for strategy development process	5
6. Strategic discussion for the Executive Board.....	5
7. Bridge funding mechanism	6
8. Resource Mobilization	7
9. 2021 Budget.....	8
10. CLOSED SESSION (Part 1) for Board Members and Alternates only	8
11. CLOSED SESSION (Part 2) for Board Members and Alternates only	8
12. RESTRICTED SESSION for Board Members, Alternates and selected members of the Secretariat only	8
13. Report from the Chair of the Proposals Review Committee	9
14. Unitaid portfolio overview.....	10
15. Presentation of Area for Intervention (Afi): ““Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (RMNCH): new tools for reducing maternal mortality”	10
16. Presentation of Area for Intervention (Afi): “Accelerating tools to drive TB detection”	11
17. Any other business.....	12
18. List of participants.....	11

Executive Summary

- The Chair congratulated Dr. Philippe Duneton on his appointment as Executive Director of Unitaïd.
- Agenda of the meeting and minutes of the 35th Executive Board meeting were adopted.
- The Executive Director outlined the 2021 Secretariat priorities : staff engagement, but also the strengthening of the existing portfolio and the engagement in the COVID-19 response remain the key aspects of it as well as the development of the next strategy.
- The Executive Board agreed that an external review of Unitaïd’s current strategy was necessary, which would require an extension of the current strategy for an extra six months. The review would be conducted by external consultants under the oversight of the Board leadership, acting as a Steering Committee.
- The Executive Board approved Resolution 1 : External review and extension of Unitaïd’s 2017-2021 Strategy (UNITAID/EB37/2020/R1).
- The Executive Board heard an update on the work of in COVID-19 diagnostics and therapeutics and reaffirmed its support to it while ensuring balance in the portfolio between the three diseases and COVID-19.
- The Executive Board supported a removal of the requirement to repay the bridge financing with additional donor funding as initially required (UNITAID/EB37/2020/R2).
- The Executive Board welcomed the positive news on new contributions to Unitaïd core and ACT-A work.
- The Executive Board approved Unitaïd 2021 budget (UNITAID/EB37/2020/R3).
- The Executive Board approved the creation of a temporary non-voting Board Seat (UNITAID/EB37/2020/R4) and approved the invitation to Japan to join this Board Seat (UNITAID/EB37/2020/R5).
- The Chair of the Proposals Review Committee reported on the committee’s recent work, and the impact of COVID-19 on it. He emphasized the added value of UnitaïdExplore to identify transformative innovations and encourage Unitaïd to further enhance it.
- The Executive Board heard about key highlights from the Unitaïd portfolio and about the assessment undertaken to measure the impact of COVID-19 on the portfolio and make the necessary adjustments.
- The Executive Board endorsed the Area for Intervention “Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (RMNCH): new tools for reducing maternal mortality” (UNITAID/EB37/2020/R6)
- The Executive Board endorsed the Area for Intervention “Accelerating tools to drive TB detection” (UNITAID/EB37/2020/R7)

1. Opening remarks from the Chair

The Chair opened the meeting recalling the remarkable work of the Secretariat in facing and adapting to the new COVID-19 challenges. She congratulated Dr Philippe Duneton in his recent appointment as Executive Director of Unitaid and thanked the staff for their work. The Chair stressed the three main objectives of this meeting: 1/ To lay down a clear basis for launching the strategic reflection for Unitaid's future; 2/ Establish the framework of the EB expectations for the new era; 3/ Articulate and clarify the modalities to accommodate new members in Unitaid governance.

New Board members and observers were welcomed to the meeting. The representative of Japan, Koji Yonetani, highlighted the substantive contribution of Unitaid to the Covid-response and in global health and expressed the intent of his government to increase Japan's financial contribution in the coming period towards Unitaid and in addition to the Medicines Patent Pool. In that context, he also expressed the wish of Japan to engage in Unitaid's governance.

2. Agenda of the EB37 meeting

The Board adopted the agenda of the meeting (UNITAID/EB37/2020/1/REV1).

3. Minutes from previous meeting: EB35, 17-18 June 2020

The Board adopted the minutes of the 35th Executive Board (EB) meeting of June 2020 (UNITAID/EB37/2020/2). It was noted that no minutes were taken during the 36th EB meeting, which took place in a closed format and was dedicated to the selection of new Executive Director.

4. Report from the Executive Director

The Board Chair congratulated the Executive Director on his recent appointment and commended him and the staff for what the Secretariat achieved over the past year through Unitaid's existing portfolio as well as engagement in the COVID-19 response. Board members welcomed the Executive Director's excellent report and his commitment to contribute to the response to the Covid-19 crisis and his vision for the future of Unitaid.

In line with the priorities set out for the Executive Director by the Board, the Executive Director outlined five key priorities for the Secretariat in 2021 : i) Reinforce and manage our portfolio; ii) Engage in the COVID-19 response; iii) Develop Unitaid's Strategy for 2022-26; iv) Mobilize additional resources and leverage partners and v) Enhance staff engagement and well-being. In addition, three principles will guide the work of Unitaid : "simplify, accelerate and transform"

The Executive Director emphasized that staff are Unitaid's most valuable asset and their well-being will remain a top priority. He briefed on the specific actions which are underway to further engage staff and informed that reinforcing and managing the organization's portfolio alongside ongoing engagement in the COVID-19 response will continue. Development of Unitaid's next strategy will be an important workstream that will inform Unitaid's direction going forward and will be developed through an inclusive process. The Executive Director stressed that implementation of these priorities will be grounded in a strong resource mobilization strategy. The importance of trusting relationships with civil society, communities and partners was stressed.

In addition to the Executive Director's report, the results of the recent staff survey were presented to the Board by Willis Towers Watson, the organisation in charge of running the survey. The results

showed clear progress since last year for all categories, especially for open communication, strategy and values, efficiency/risk management, career and Development, but also well-being.

The Board Chair and members underlined their commitment to working closely with the Secretariat to increase Unitaïd's visibility and international recognition in the global health arena. Looking to 2021 and beyond the Board will continue to collaborate with the Secretariat to develop the organization's next strategy.

5. Unitaïd 2022-2026 Strategy : discussion on the outcomes of the PSC workshop and future strategic direction, including options for strategy development process

Based on previous PSC discussions, the Secretariat developed two options for discussion with the Executive Board : Option A proposed marginal change to the initial approach put forward but included additional deep dives and stakeholder consultations from early 2021, while Option B catered for an independent contribution in the strategy development process, to be launched in Q1 2021, and included more extensive stakeholder consultations. Both options have an impact on the initial timeline that was presented. Potential focus areas were highlighted for an external review including Unitaïd's high-level strategic positioning, how we identify and define priorities using disease narratives to inform our areas of focus, and looking at setting clear goals and approach to target setting for AfIs, as well as operational aspects of Unitaïd's model such as the balance between rigor and flexibility in grant management processes.

The Executive Board agreed that an external review of Unitaïd's current strategy was necessary and would strengthen and provide key inputs for the ongoing development of Unitaïd's next Strategy. It was recognized that the focus should be on getting to the right strategy and that a delay of 6 months, to June 2022, was acceptable in this context. Members agreed that the review should be conducted by one or more external consultants and be overseen by the Board leadership, acting as a Steering Committee. These elements were captured in an Option C shared back to the Board to facilitate alignment on the approach. Board Members agreed this was the best way forward.

The Executive Board approved Resolution 1 : External review and extension of Unitaïd's 2017-2021 Strategy (UNITAID/EB37/2020/R1).

6. Strategic discussion for the Executive Board

The Secretariat presented on its role in COVID-19 diagnostics and therapeutics, highlighting the importance of these tools. In the area of diagnostics, Unitaïd has supported different technologies, starting with molecular tests which were rapidly developed and made available, as well as antigen Rapid Diagnostic Tests (RDTs). Unitaïd has been playing a role to ensure access to these tests, looking to overcome supply and affordability barriers, creating demand for the products, bringing new suppliers to market as well as technology transfer. Going forward, additional work in this area may include supporting introduction and generating further evidence to broaden the use of these tests. An alternative technology under exploration in this area are self-tests, with potential for supply-side interventions to accelerate product development and prepare the ground for country uptake.

The landscape looks different in the area of therapeutics, where much is still under development. The first effective therapeutic, dexamethasone, was recommended in July 2020 and data are expected in the coming weeks for new products, including monoclonal antibodies and small molecule antivirals,

leading to potential access in 2021. A holistic approach is taken across research gaps and needs and market preparedness to drive uptake of effective products and ensuring there is a strong evidence base. Unitaid brings clear added value in the areas of targeted Research and Development (R&D) to facilitate access in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMIC) and market preparedness to ensure rapid deployment across geographies in an equitable way. Current projects will ensure products developed are suitable for use in LMICs, help address evidence gaps on the use of these products in LMIC populations, and prepare the ground for new products coming through the pipeline. However, additional work is required, and Unitaid has projects in development against which new resources are being mobilized.

Executive Board Members thanked the Secretariat for the presentation and the updates provided in the area of COVID-19 diagnostics and therapeutics, expressing support for Unitaid's work in this area. Comments and concerns were raised on ongoing research on repurposed drugs (e.g. hydroxychloroquine), the importance of ensuring balance in the portfolio between the three diseases and COVID-19 and facilitating integration in the response where possible, as well as funding availability to support high priority areas.

Some Board members stressed : the need to work closely with local producers and partners on the ground, including the Africa CDC, to best prepare countries to integrate innovations ; the importance of equitable access to health products, "Unitaid's DNA", and the need to open up Unitaid's field of action beyond the three pandemics, a diversification that has proven its worth in the during the Covid-19 crisis.

7. The Secretariat was also asked to provide data per countries on Unitaid's achievement within ACT-A to facilitates members' communication around Unitaid's action. Bridge funding mechanism

The Board was invited to decide on the possibility to convert the bridge funding mechanism adopted during EB35 into a Unitaid contribution to the ACT-A initiative.

The rationale behind the request is threefold : 1) Resource Mobilization : ACT-A has introduced Unitaid to new donors however these are more inclined to fund specific, forward-looking project activities rather than repay the bridging mechanism ; 2) The conversion does not materially impact the future core pipeline as the US\$35 million bridge had been limited to 50% of the forecasted US\$70 million of unused funds in 2020 in order to reduce the risk of over-commitment; 3) The contribution continues to raise Unitaid's profile in the ACT-A initiative. As of today, nearly the full amount of the bridge funding has been used.

Regarding the impact on the investment plan for future years, it should remain limited. In 2020, despite these exceptional investments and the disruptions on most grants, the core portfolio still represents 80% of the overall spend. For 2021, the Secretariat has worked under the assumption that Unitaid would receive \$50 million of ACT-A contributions which would be exclusively used for ACT-A activities. Further COVID-19 work is expected to be funded with additional resources for ACT-A; amounts will reflect resource mobilization efforts (additional funds). In both 2021 and 2022, it is expected that Unitaid will keep a very strong core pipeline of \$196 million in 2021 and \$200 million in 2022.

The Board acknowledged that Unitaid benefited from an increased visibility through ACT-A, and supported a removal of the requirement to repay the bridge financing with additional donor funding as initially required. However, Some members expressed that challenges raised by the refunding principle of the bridge mechanism should have been better anticipated and that lessons should be learnt from this experience. Other members raised concerns regarding the setbacks that can already be seen in the three diseases and will require particular attention as well as additional investment from Unitaid in the coming years. Transparency on ACT-A investments was also discussed and requested by EB Members. The Board approved Resolution 2 : Modification of ACT-A Bridge Funding Requirements (UNITAID/EB37/2020/R2)

8. Resource Mobilization

Unitaid's role in ACT-A has increased its visibility and exposed the organisation to new potential donors. Unitaid's potential to contribute to the global effort to accelerate Covid diagnostics and therapeutics under the ACT-A umbrella was recognized and supported first by Executive Board members, with additional funding France (€10 million) and the Republic of Korea, which has been confirmed, and in on-going positive discussions with Norway and Spain. This early support to Unitaid on Therapeutics and Diagnostics helped leverage support and build credibility in discussions with new donors. Agreements are also currently being finalised with Canada (US\$11.6 million for therapeutics) and Japan (US\$11 million for therapeutics and MPP). Discussions are also being pursued with the UK and Germany.

Core funding to Unitaid for 2020 has remained stable, thanks to the multiyear commitments from many of its key donors. Preliminary discussions are underway with potential new donors such as the European Commission and Germany for core contribution in the coming years, in particular to open discussions linked to Unitaid's new strategy.

In terms of objectives for next year, the Secretariat will focus on renewing multi-year and annual agreements with existing donors, where terms have concluded in 2020 and engaging with new donors to Unitaid via ACT-A regarding other areas of common interest with a view towards potential core contributions. The new strategy of Unitaid (2022-2026) is an important opportunity to develop a new investment case and potentially organise a resource mobilisation moment. Finally, Unitaid will also consider linking resource mobilization efforts to specific opportunities such as the momentum around the adoption of the global strategy to eliminate cervical cancer next year.

The Board welcomed the positive news on new contributions. Some members indicated they are engaging in actions to support resource mobilization efforts and encouraged others to do so to, including through important international summits such as G7, G20 etc and their rotating chairs during the year 2021, they highlighted it would be an opportunity to increase Unitaid's visibility. Spain and Norway confirmed that their potential ACT-A contributions were in process and should be finalised before the end of the year. Echoing earlier strategic discussions, some members highlighted the importance to strike the right balance between ACT-A related efforts and efforts to raise money for the core activities of Unitaid, recognizing that covid-19 has dominated most donor considerations in 2020.

9. 2021 Budget

The Unitaid 2021 budget (US\$ 32.3 million) is recommended by the FAC to the Board for adoption. The proposed budget was developed on the basis of zero growth on core budget compared to 2020 (US\$ 30.0 million), to which was added an additional request of US\$ 2.3 million in order to support the extra ACT-A work. It is expected that these additional efforts could be supported by the recovery on overheads charged to existing and new donors on additional contributions towards ACT-A, with a respective charge of 2% in the case of existing donors and 7% for new donors (the expected recovery based on current projections would amount to US\$ 5.7 million). These additional resources will be mainly used for grant management as well as strategy and ACT-A coordination, via the opening of temporary posts. Despite this increase, the budget remains in line with Unitaid's key performance indicators (OPEX below 2%).

The proposed budget was the object of robust discussion from the FAC. The Chair of the FAC specified that the external review of the strategy which was being discussed at the beginning of the Board meeting had not been planned for in this initial version of the budget and might require a slight adjustment.

The Executive Board approved Resolution 3 : Unitaid 2021 budget (UNITAID/EB37/2020/R3).

10. CLOSED SESSION (Part 1) for Board Members and Alternates only

11. CLOSED SESSION (Part 2) for Board Members and Alternates only

12. RESTRICTED SESSION for Board Members, Alternates and selected members of the Secretariat only

Following discussions within the GWG and the Executive Board on expansion and evolution of the Board, and in light of the expression of interest from Japan to join Unitaid's Board, the Board Chair requested the Governance Working Group (GWG) to step-up its earlier work on Board composition, with a view in particular, to developing a recommendation to the Board on the integration of new donors in Unitaid's governance structures. Following the opening of this work in the second part of 2020, GWG members quickly agreed that any changes to Unitaid's Board composition intended to give new donors a role in Unitaid's governance should also ensure that balanced representation is observed within the Board.

After discussions on this issue, the GWG recommended the creation of a shared temporary non-voting Board Seat for new donor countries wishing to participate in Unitaid's governance. It was proposed that Japan be invited to join this Seat, on a provisional basis. Japan may subsequently be invited to join the Board on a permanent basis within a shared Seat with voting privileges, upon meeting the conditions set by the Board in Seoul in June 2019:

- A meaningful financial contribution;
- Sustained over a period of time;
- Taking into account political and other circumstantial considerations;
- Any new potential Board member shows commitment to the Unitaid Constitution.

The GWG suggested that new donors could be incorporated into Unitaid's Board on a permanent basis either through sharing an existing Seat (subject to an existing Board members offering to share on a voluntary basis); or within a newly created shared Seat.

It is proposed that the GWG continues its work on Board evolution and composition during 2021, with the view to presenting a further recommendation to the Board by the end of 2021. This work will build on the current consensus within the GWG that any expansion of the Executive Board should be final and limited to two Seats. One of these should be a shared Seat to include new donors wishing to participate in Unitaids governance and the other designed to ensure a balanced and inclusive representation within the Board (including country members with different development backgrounds).

In particular, the GWG has identified the following areas for further work and consideration: (1) conditionality criteria for new members, consistent with obligations for all members, and (2) modalities of shared Seats. The GWG is expected to report on the progress of its work at the next Board meeting.

The Board Chair will continue discussions with Japan in order to finalise the conditions for its permanent membership ("substantial and sustained over time" un-earmarked contribution to Unitaids budget).

The Board approved the creation of a temporary non-voting Board Seat (UNITAID/EB37/2020/R4) and approved the invitation to Japan to join this Board Seat (UNITAID/EB37/2020/R5).

13. Report from the Chair of the Proposals Review Committee

The Chair of the Proposal Review Committee (PRC) underlined that it has been an exceptional year due to COVID-19 restrictions and consequent teleworking. Despite the additional workload from proposed COVID-related extensions of existing grants and expressions of interest, the PRC performed well. The COVID-19 investments reviewed by the PRC and approved by the Board were assessed to represent a strategic, efficient and coordinated response to the COVID-19 situation.

The PRC Chair emphasized that UnitaidExplore is an example of Unitaids unique capability to identify transformative innovations and adapt quickly in an evolving context to apply learning, while implementing new processes. Targeted outreach including to innovator networks produced an opportunity for high quality investments in oxygen therapy.

To support a more efficient process and more diverse outreach, Unitaid needs to consider ways to enhance the UnitaidExplore mechanisms, including through a shortened contracting phase and strengthened engagement with civil society organization and innovator networks in low-and lower middle- income countries. There are also opportunities to explore how civil society networks can support UnitaidExplore at the stage of formulating themes for calls for proposals as well as the application stage.

To further inform the evolution of the UnitaidExplore funding stream, the PRC looks forward to the upcoming review of the second call for proposals focused on pediatric formulations. A Joint Review Committee meeting with a pitch day is planned for the end of February 2021.

Board members raised questions on the level of interaction between the review committee and scientific communities as well as efforts by the PRC to diversify the expertise of the committee particularly in areas including intellectual property, community engagement, digital technology, artificial intelligence and data management. Regarding local implementers and partners, the PRC Chair confirmed that there is a very strong element of local ownership and local implementation in proposals and shared that the PRC would like to see more leads from local settings.

14. Unitaid portfolio overview

- Key highlights from Unitaid portfolio and report on the WHO enabler review
- Strategic assessment of the core portfolio

The Board heard about key highlights from the Unitaid portfolio, with examples in the field of HIV, cervical cancer and tuberculosis. Successes but also the challenges were presented, with the latter particularly related to COVID-19 disruptions. The Secretariat also reported on its collaboration with WHO and on the WHO enabler grants reviewed earlier this year. The review showed good programmatic performance of the grants with over 200 distinct deliverables in 2 years across HIV (and co-infections), TB, Malaria and cross-cutting areas. It also showed strong strategic alignment between WHO and Unitaid and good collaboration and efficiency, which contribute to creating the conditions for the uptake and adoption of health products in areas of relevance for Unitaid. Opportunities to further strengthen Unitaid's relationship with WHO were also identified with the possibility to go one step further in terms of information sharing, coordination and streamlining grant management.

As reported previously to the Board, the Unitaid portfolio has been impacted by COVID-19, resulting in delays and various disruptions. Unitaid's Secretariat has worked to track and measure this impact, assess the medium and long term effect on the strategic value of the grants, and make the necessary adjustments. The assessment, which was undertaken at various levels shows the great relevance of Unitaid's portfolio especially in the current context and the importance of affordability, simplification integration and community-based interventions. At the same time the assessment also concluded that intensified efforts, increased investment and course corrections might be required to deliver the intended impact.

Some members insisted on the cross-cutting approach of Unitaid, which is a capital gain from its project portfolio, as well as and the need to adapt its actions to specific contexts specific, such as in Central and West Africa.

15. Presentation of Area for Intervention (Afi): “Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (RMNCH): new tools for reducing maternal mortality”

Unitaid has built a strong track record in the area of RMNCH since it was included under its 2017-2022 strategy, with 50% of its portfolio currently targeting pregnant women, women and children. The new Afi put forward by the Secretariat in this area focuses on new ways of reducing maternal mortality through two high impact opportunities in the prevention and management of post-partum hemorrhage, and the diagnosis of pre-eclampsia. On post-partum hemorrhage, the Afi centers on accelerating the introduction of new preventive therapies (e.g. heat-stable carbetocin) and the development and commercialization of new formulations (e.g. inhaled or sublingual oxytocin). On pre-eclampsia, the focus is on catalyzing new point-of-care pre-eclampsia diagnostics and tools, including higher accuracy protein-to-creatinine dipsticks and new blood pressure measurement devices. Unitaid is well positioned to address key gaps through pilot country implementation and demand generation activities; addressing evidence gaps on impact, cost-effectiveness and operational feasibility; and to develop transition and scale up strategies that are tailored to country contexts. Consistent with the investment plan, the Secretariat proposed a staggered approach for this Afi. Launching the post-

partum hemorrhage call first would allow for learnings from this call and grant agreement development process to be leveraged and applied to the pre-eclampsia call in 2022.

The Executive Board expressed strong support for this new Afl and underscored the importance of involving communities and other civil society movements to support demand creation and maximize scalability and impact. Members also highlighted opportunities for integration of RMNCH services with HIV, TB and malaria to address unmet needs and enhance quality of care. They encouraged the Secretariat to leverage Unitaids strengths and partnerships in the RMNCH ecosystem, including with Global Financing Facility, to support sustainability and linkages with domestic resources. Some members asked to open future calls for projects in the field of sexual and reproductive health rights, and to also target an adolescent audience. France informed the Board of the Generation Equality Forum to be held in the summer of 2021 where these themes and the role of Unitaids could be highlighted.

Supporting the need for Unitaids to focus strategically on new tools to reduce maternal mortality with a view to contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals, the Executive Board endorsed this Afl (UNITAID/EB37/2020/R6) and requested the Secretariat to launch appropriate calls for proposals.

16. Presentation of Area for Intervention (Afl): “Accelerating tools to drive TB detection”

The Secretariat presented a new Area for Intervention (Afl) on Accelerating tools to drive tuberculosis (TB) detection, underlining that innovative TB diagnostics fills a key gap in Unitaids current TB portfolio. The Secretariat reminded the Board of the main challenges in TB diagnostics and emphasized that TB case detection at the primary and community level is either limited or non-existent. As a result of COVID-19, the public health need has only increased; by 2025 it is expected that an additional 6.3 million people will be infected with TB and an additional 1.4 million deaths will result from TB infection due to COVID-19 disruptions. Amongst potential opportunities for decentralized diagnostics at the community and primary health care level, two priority interventions were highlighted – non-sputum-based and integrated diagnostic solutions and adapting COVID-19 diagnostic and case detection solutions for TB detection such as contact tracing and new sample detection tools.

Board members welcomed the Afl, noting its potential to balance Unitaids current portfolio. Members emphasized the importance of the role of communities and civil society in the fight against TB. Engaging these stakeholders will be crucial for demand generation and gaining a greater understanding of what test options communities prefer, noting that treatment is predicated on rates of detection. Board members also emphasized the importance of affordability and equitable pricing.

The Executive Board supported the need for Unitaids to focus strategically on accelerating tools to drive tuberculosis detection to contribute to the global TB targets set out in the WHO End TB Strategy and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Executive Board endorsed the Afl (UNITAID/EB37/2020/R7) and requested the Secretariat to launch appropriate calls for proposals and to present progress on implementation to the PSC.

17. Any other business

The Board Chair indicated that this was the last Board meeting of Fifa Rahman as NGO Board Member, who will be replaced by Rohit Malpani as Board Member and Javier Hourcade Bellocq as alternates. Board members joined the Chair in thanking Fifa for her contributions to the work of the Board over the past years and wish her good luck in her next endeavours.

The Board Chair also thanked Sanne Wendes for her work at Unitaid and her contribution to the recent organization's development. On behalf of the Executive Board, she wished her the very best for her new position.

18. List of participants

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