



**Unitaid Executive Board Meeting
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Agenda item 2

Report from the Executive Director

For Information For Review and Advice For Decision

Executive Director Report to the Executive Board

Dear Board members,

The world faces unprecedented challenges with war raging in Ukraine, the global economy heading into recession and inflation surging, as we count the cost of a COVID-19 pandemic that has not run its course.

Progress towards meeting global health targets has been impacted to such a degree that, without bringing about faster and more equitable access to affordable health products, we have little chance of ending HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria by 2030. In addition, climate change is threatening the health and livelihoods of hundreds of millions around the world and making the environment in which we operate even more challenging.

The COVID-19 pandemic not only set back progress in the fight against HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, and other health conditions that strike at the most vulnerable in low- and middle-income countries. It also laid bare a huge gap in healthcare between high- and low-income countries and between rich and poor that can only be closed by securing equitable access to health innovation.

The unique contribution Unitaid makes to the global health response is more relevant than ever. The way Unitaid operates, by enabling properly tested and easy-to-use health innovations to quickly reach those who need them, proved to be an essential skill in our work to address the COVID-19 pandemic. As leaders of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) and the ACT-A Oxygen Emergency Task Force, we worked with partners to provide effective tools to fight COVID-19, most notably medical oxygen, an area in which Unitaid was at the forefront of the response. Under the Global Oxygen Alliance, a successor to the oxygen taskforce, we will steer future efforts to increase access to medical oxygen.

On the strength of our unique expertise and experience fighting COVID-19, helping the world to prepare for future pandemics is now one of our key programmatic priorities, alongside HIV, TB, malaria and women and children's health.

The launch of the most ambitious strategy in Unitaid's history enables us to capitalize on our wide-ranging experience to bolster efforts to achieve global health goals by driving equitable access to bring cutting-edge health innovations to people who most need them.

We are striving for increased strategic coherence, guided by our three objectives: accelerating the introduction of key health products; creating conditions for sustainable, equitable access; and fostering inclusive partnerships to spur innovation.

We recognize that a focus on equity, grounded in strong partnerships, and interaction at country and community level, is essential to accelerate the adoption of key health products. We will increasingly engage with implementing partners, civil society and communities to shift the balance of decision-making in favour of those facing the greatest health inequities, thereby making the identification, design and launch of new health products even more successful.

In a world of constrained resources, the impact of our work is critical: Unitaid saves lives, time and money and advances equitable access to health innovations. We have proved time and again we are ahead of the curve and invest in and support the right products and solutions, such as HIV self-testing kits or spatial repellents to control malaria, which benefit more than 100 million people a year.

Armed with a persuasive new strategy, we look forward to engaging closely with the Board to drive our resource mobilization campaign and related advocacy efforts in the months ahead. While the threat of global recession, amid rising energy prices and accelerating inflation, is straining government budgets, I believe our value proposition, set out in a detailed investment case, is compelling. In a world where resources are increasingly scarce, Unitaid greatly amplifies the impact of investments by donors and countries in global health.

Products piloted and supported by Unitaid now reach more than 100 million people each year. Reduced prices and efficiencies to health systems that come with these products are projected to generate between US\$5 and US\$6 billion in savings by 2030. This frees up funding that can be invested in additional efforts. Unitaid's investments are also essential to reaching global health targets more quickly. They maximise the impact of investments in the Global Fund and the broader response to HIV, TB, and malaria, playing an important role in accelerating the overall response by more than three years.

Unitaid's pipeline of investments has the capacity to save many lives, but the consequences will be bleak if we fail to back Unitaid's strategy with the resources we need. The effectiveness of the global response will be blunted and the healthcare gap between haves and have-nots is likely to grow even wider. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we succeed for the good of the people and communities we are working with.

Our forecast of an annual funding need of \$300 million over the next five years is consistent with levels throughout the previous strategy period and would enable us to deliver the results envisioned by the strategy. We are encouraging new donors who made significant contributions to Unitaid last year through ACT-A to become regular contributors to the core work of Unitaid. We are also engaging with Executive Board members with a view to renewing multi-year agreements.

I am grateful to have the effective support of the Board and of the Board's leadership, which have been the bedrock of our response to COVID-19 and played a vital part in the successful development and adoption of Unitaid's new strategy. The Board's continued support will be crucial as we seek to strengthen our partnerships. I would also like to express my gratitude for the hard work of the Secretariat staff, their dedication and commitment and acknowledge all that we have achieved this year. The fight for equitable access for people in need is the very essence of Unitaid and at the heart of everything we do.

Operationalizing a transformative strategy for Unitaid

As we move into a new strategic period for 2023-2027, Unitaid has emerged as a more visible global health actor by demonstrating the unique and essential contribution we make to the global response. The pandemic put a spotlight on how our work on access and our unique skill set allow us to convene and collaborate with a broad range of partners. Over the last fifteen years, we have demonstrated how we can be flexible and bold in bringing forward transformative innovations that are affordable, accessible, and designed to meet people's needs. Unitaid's successful introduction of HIV self-testing - by supporting the development and evaluation of effective delivery models, leading to critical policy changes and accessible prices for millions of people - is a prime example.

I am confident that over the course of the next five years, guided by our 2023-2027 Strategy, we will deliver even more life-changing solutions and continue to push boundaries to ensure a better global health response. What our work to date has demonstrated is that equitable access to health innovations is an essential element of the health response.

There are important lessons from the COVID-19 response that the world should build on as new treaties are negotiated, and new organizations emerge to fund and organize pandemic preparedness and response. Together we need to build a continuum between pandemic preparedness and response by equipping markets and countries to roll out critical diagnostics and treatments, rapidly and effectively, through simplified models of care. Equitable access must be at the heart of this process.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need for more formal access strategies. Going forward we need to build commitment and consensus that public investment in research and development should respond to the needs of low- and middle-income countries and be accompanied with requirements that ensure public access. Interventions that can prevent disease and reduce the strain on health systems should be prioritized. Similarly, pharmaceutical companies and developers should include access provisions for low and middle-income countries as a part of pandemic preparedness, so that access to care is equitable, timely and any response is truly global.

In the new year, we formally enter our new strategic period. Unitaid's success will be measured through the tangible impact our investments have on people's lives. While Unitaid continues to focus on accelerating introduction and adoption of key health products, the objectives under the new strategy also provide an opportunity for Unitaid to work towards creating systemic conditions for equitable access that are sustainable and fostering more inclusive partnerships and alliances to drive innovation and access to it. With regard to our strategic objective focused on partnership, we will approach 2023 as a learning year and we will collaborate with the Board in exploring options to resource this work. The aim is to align on a way forward by 2024.

In collaboration with the Board, we have already kick-started the implementation of our 2023-2027 Strategy through the recent approval of key investments addressing hepatitis C virus and the agreement to launch two calls for proposals. One of the calls targets supporting the use of flexibilities under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). The second call focuses on preventing deaths among adults and children by simplifying and decentralizing the Advanced HIV Disease care package.

In line with the strategic principles outlined in our new strategy, we also remain committed to considering our work and related operations in a broader context. As climate change accelerates, it is becoming one of the most important drivers of health issues in the world. Therefore, Unitaid is committed to measuring our own climate impact. With that in mind, I am pleased to report that we have already taken steps in 2022 to reduce our emissions. At the end of last year Unitaid launched its Climate Action Roadmap at the close of the COP26 meeting. This roadmap highlights our commitments to reduce our carbon footprint across our Secretariat and our investment portfolio.

A new key performance indicator has been incorporated in the performance framework of the 2023-2027 strategy to measure the Secretariat's progress in meeting a target of reducing CO2 emissions by 40 percent by 2025. In order to move towards greener procurement, we have set a target of decarbonizing our procurements through net-zero and environmental pledges and effective actions from suppliers. In 2022, as part of our new supplier selection process, we have introduced evaluation criteria based on suppliers' own carbon footprint reduction initiatives. As far as our existing suppliers are concerned, we have started to collect information on their net-zero efforts. We plan to conduct this assessment annually going forward into 2023 and eventually to monitor the suppliers' greening efforts.

We are also preparing to include climate considerations in the development and management of our portfolio. For example, in the first quarter of 2022, during the Unitaid grant implementers' forum, we launched an initiative with grant implementers to run carbon footprint assessment pilots, financed with a limited amount of grant savings, to pave the way for the introduction of low-carbon approaches in our grant-making model. Two pilot candidates received the go-ahead in October as part of a first wave, and we aim to disseminate results in the first half of 2023. We are developing a set of green principles for Unitaid grant management that we look forward to introducing in 2023.

This is an exciting moment, and I would like to thank the Board for your guidance and collaboration throughout the strategy development process. In order to ensure we are well placed to successfully execute our new strategy, together with the Board we have agreed that Unitaid's existing operating model should be reviewed and updated where necessary to fine-tune the way we work. The Secretariat has already initiated steps to ensure a successful transition.

Earlier this year, the Secretariat began to prepare for the implementation of the new strategy by looking at key areas of Unitaid's operating model that need to evolve. These areas are framed under five workstreams focused on Unitaid's performance framework: prioritization of investments; operationalizing Unitaid's programmatic priorities; country stakeholder engagement; and community and civil society engagement. Through this process the senior management team will determine the need for any adjustments to be made, as well as the timelines for their implementation.

We are also conducting a functional review to look at what steps could be taken to ensure the most effective and efficient implementation of the 2023-2027 Strategy. The review provides an opportunity for us to reflect and ensure we are optimally structured to deliver what is a bold and ambitious new strategy. The Secretariat began the comprehensive functional review in September. The review is looking at all areas where change may be needed and will put forward relevant solutions that make our operations more effective, efficient and impactful.

The findings from the review will be available by the end of the first quarter of 2023. We will keep the Board updated as our work moves forward. Any recommended changes to our current Board-approved Unitaid operating model will be presented to the Board for your approval. We look forward to the outcomes of the review and leveraging the findings to further strengthen Unitaid's model and approach.

Securing the resources to deliver on Unitaid's 2023-2027 Strategy

The 2023-2027 strategic period is an exciting opportunity for Unitaid to build on the significant successes we have achieved to date. Acquiring additional resources is essential to delivering on the promise of our new strategy.

Even though Unitaid's work has never been more important to delivering equitable access to many people with unmet health needs, this is not reflected in our funding. Over the past strategic period, multilateral funding for global health has come under pressure for several reasons. These include the disruptive impact of COVID-19, which gave rise to a rapid evolution of pandemic preparedness and response efforts and actors. A series of natural and man-made humanitarian disasters, including the war in Ukraine, have seen a diversion of funding initially allocated to global health priorities. The cost-of-living crisis faced by several donor and programme countries has exacerbated an already challenging situation. The impact of some of these developments is reflected in the partially successful replenishment efforts of global health multilaterals. Looking ahead, development assistance and increased requests for funding in the global health arena are forcing donors to make some very difficult choices. Like several other global health organizations, Unitaid has felt impacted by these developments, as reflected in our recent resource mobilization updates and funding forecast to the Board.

Further to our discussions with the committees in October we are putting plans in place that will provide clear direction for the future. Through continued close collaboration with the Board, I am committed to mitigating the impact of limited funding on Unitaid's investment pipeline and ensuring that Unitaid is well positioned to deliver on the promise of our 2023-2027 Strategy. Our track record demonstrates that Unitaid's pipeline of investments has the capacity to change and save lives, but we need to ensure Unitaid is well funded. If we fail to fully finance Unitaid's strategy, the consequences will be most acutely felt by those with unmet health needs at greatest risk of poverty, illness and poor health outcomes.

Under my leadership, we have made resource mobilization and related communications and advocacy efforts a top priority over the next two years. Thanks to support from the Board, as we work to expand our donor base we plan to ramp up our investments in this area. To drive a successful resource mobilization effort, we are investing in increasing our visibility, strategic communications and advocacy efforts while also devoting more human resources to resource mobilization. The aim is to tailor our engagement more effectively and systematically with key current, emerging and potential donors. We are also generating more content on Unitaid's unique value in accelerating access to health innovations. The Unitaid Investment Case clearly outlines the benefits of investing in Unitaid's ambitious and transformative 2023-2027 Strategy. This critical tool will be accompanied by a set of strategic corporate communications materials.

We have identified a set of important events in 2023 which we will leverage as part of our wider resource mobilization strategy, including the UN High-Level Meetings on Universal Health Coverage and tuberculosis. In addition, we are working with a coalition of partners including communities, civil society and parliamentarians to increase Unitaid's visibility and strengthen our advocacy efforts.

We have already made significant progress. We are deeply grateful for the renewed commitment from France for three years and we are expecting more multiyear commitments at the beginning of next year. We are also grateful for the ongoing support and commitment from the Board and our current donors. With increased engagement and dialogue with G7 countries and a robust and compelling pipeline of investments, I remain confident that we can secure additional contributions from donors and deliver on our ambitious 2023-2027 Strategy.

As we advocate for additional funding, we remain focused on the commitments we made within the international community to advance the Sustainable Development Goals and important health related targets such as universal health coverage. Unitaid's work contributes to both. It is imperative that we succeed for the good of the people and communities we are working with, and for.

Culture and ways of working

With an ambitious strategy to execute and significant resources to mobilize, Unitaid's staff have a lot on their shoulders. Staff well-being is a top priority for me. We continue to prioritize staff engagement, in close collaboration with the senior management team.

Since my last report in June, we are working to further strengthen Unitaid's people management culture. Among other things, we are developing a supervisor's charter to standardize management across the organization in line with Unitaid's values. We aim to imbed key elements of the charter in our performance management development system for managers as part of a more consistent approach to people management. We are also working to roll out the charter in the first half of next year. We are offering training to foster behaviour change and strengthen organizational culture, touching on feedback, performance management, as well as psychological safety and ensuring a respectful, inclusive and equitable workplace. This work began in October and is being carried out in a consultative and inclusive manner with staff and will be completed by the first quarter of 2023.

I am pleased to report that the Global Health Campus has been open for several months and staff are returning to the office, which has been good for team cohesion. We have been piloting an approach in which teams come into the office on agreed days of the week to support enhanced collaboration within and amongst teams. The hybrid model currently in place is in line with WHO policy and is proving to be a productive way of operating. We will continue to monitor the approach and adapt it as needed. In addition, we continue to issue the all-staff survey twice a year.

Delivering impact through our portfolio

Unitaid's work has consistently demonstrated that the value of innovation in the global health response is boundless. Equitable access to innovative health products is more critical than ever in enabling a more effective and impactful response. Our recent engagement in the COVID-19 response and our wider portfolio continue to demonstrate that Unitaid is a leader in driving this change.

Since my report in June, Unitaid has made significant investments and shown success in addressing tuberculosis. Inadequate diagnostic capacity is the greatest barrier to treatment and prevention of TB. In September Unitaid launched a \$30 million investment which targets the four million people with active TB who go undiagnosed and untreated each year, including more than half of all children with TB, by improving access to screening and diagnosis. The initiative will accelerate the introduction of new diagnostic technologies, evaluate alternative sampling approaches, and develop and evaluate combination approaches to TB diagnosis, bringing us nearer to closing the gap in TB screening and diagnosis.

In addition, Unitaid secured two new agreements to lower the price of rifapentine-based treatments to prevent tuberculosis in 138 low- and middle-income countries, including those with the highest burden of TB globally. The agreements, negotiated with manufacturers in collaboration with key partners, make 3HP, a three-month, once-weekly oral treatment, available at a ceiling price of \$14.25. This is 80 percent lower than the original price of \$72. Rifapentine 300mg single tablets, used in 3HP and 1HP - a one-month, once-daily oral treatment - will also be available for \$33.90 per 100 tablets. Both regimens significantly reduce the duration of treatment. In the past, TB preventive treatments have required patients to take multiple pills daily for six months or more. By reducing the pill burden and treatment duration, patients are more likely to take and complete the full treatment cycle.

Alongside partners, Unitaid also successfully brokered a voluntary licensing agreement for patents related to a long-acting injectable medication cabotegravir (cabotegravir LA), used for HIV prevention. The licensing agreement is an important advance that enables access to better and more affordable treatment in record time. A single injection can provide two months of continuous protection against HIV infection, removing challenges related to pill burden. The agreement gives selected manufacturers the opportunity to develop, manufacture and supply generic versions of cabotegravir LA in 90 countries where the overwhelming majority of HIV infections occur. Unitaid's capacity to forge a coalition in advance of the license with Medicines Patent Pool (MPP), demonstrates our unique role and underscores the utility of not only guaranteeing access through MPP, but the critical importance of working on an enabling environment, demand generation, treatment literacy and various barriers across the value chain.

I am pleased to highlight our investment commitment to advance a package of care to prevent and treat postpartum haemorrhage that is tailored to low- and lower-middle income countries where nearly 94% of all maternal deaths occur. Our investments aim to reduce this inexcusable gap in care by ensuring critical medicines are available and adapted for use where they are most needed. With \$45 million invested across three complementary initiatives, we are funding the research needed to optimize use and enable broader access to products that could significantly reduce maternal mortality, saving tens of thousands of women's lives, when they are implemented at scale.

Thanks to support from the Board, we are also moving forward with three grants that will address prevention of hepatitis C virus (HCV) amongst key populations. These investments aim to demonstrate how HCV prevention technologies, including low dead-space syringes and long-acting opioid substitution therapy can be selected, introduced and adopted by communities. They also aim to increase equity through market shaping for innovative and underused HCV prevention products. These investments are in line with our programmatic priority to drive HCV elimination through

testing and treatment as well as long acting and new technologies. These grants also integrate key elements of our new strategy, specifically the importance of community-led approaches and equitable access to innovative tools and approaches, including for the most marginalized and vulnerable.

Looking ahead, in 2023 we expect to sign 11 new grants, resulting in an active portfolio of 79 grants, disbursements of US\$ 294 million and overall portfolio value of US\$ 1.5 billion. Based on our current investment plan, in 2023 we anticipate key investments consistent with our programmatic priorities as outlined in our new strategy. These include investments that will optimize care for people affected by advanced HIV disease and support work to mitigate antimalarial drug resistance.

Updates to the COVID-19 response and transition to pandemic preparedness and response

Challenges on equitable access to medical countermeasures in pandemic: the case of antivirals for COVID-19

ACT-A partners have been engaging with Pfizer for more than a year regarding access to nirmatrelvir/ritonavir (Paxlovid) but as of November 2022 no procurement had yet been executed. Only now the Global Fund and UNICEF – our procurement partners in the ACT-A Therapeutic Pillar – are finally able to confirm a conclusion of the supply arrangements, as the last hurdles with Pfizer have been addressed. A frank analysis of the factors leading to this regrettable situation is needed to avoid a similar situation in case of surges, and to better prepare for future pandemics. Notably, there is the need for the industry to enable rapid access to originator's stocks in low- and middle-income countries, while generic production is supported, to avoid excess deaths and suffering when health emergencies hit the world.

In the case of Paxlovid, data to sustain emergency use authorizations were obtained only late in 2021, amidst the peak of the Omicron wave. However, access in low- and middle-income countries was still far away. Recommended since April 2022 by WHO for patients at the highest risk of death, Paxlovid is the preferred antiviral. However, many low- and middle-income countries have not yet included it in the national guidelines, given the complexities to use it, lack of price visibility, and high prices. These challenges are also seen through the test and treat efforts we are supporting. In addition to the difficulties in the timely identification of at-risk patients and the evolution of COVID-19 burden, a lack of product for deployment has delayed the implementation of these efforts.

The proposed terms of the initial agreements with the procurement partners hampered countries' access to Paxlovid. We have repeatedly expressed strong concerns to the originator to secure better terms for all low- and middle-income countries. The final agreement by the Global Fund, on behalf of the Therapeutics Pillar, was hence significantly delayed until mid-September 2022. However only a supply of stocks with very short shelf life was then possible. With the launch of production of new batches, procurement should now be feasible.

On the other hand, following Pfizer and Medicines Patent Pool's voluntary license agreement (November 2021), two generic dossiers have now been accepted for assessment by WHO Prequalification. A generic product is expected to be prequalified shortly. Outstanding barriers to

access persist. In countries excluded from the voluntary license territory and where patents are in force, access to affordable generic versions of Paxlovid are yet to be resolved.

As we transition to the new phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, a long-term pathway is needed to secure access. The evolution of the pandemic has shown a decrease in the number of cases and their severity, in parallel to increased immunity. However, the possibility of a resurgence of a more severe variant cannot be excluded. Therefore, there is a need to continue securing access to critical therapeutics. Unitaid is actively tracking the progress of generic manufacturers that will lead to a substantial reduction in prices and availability of this life-saving medicine, enabling a robust response to a potential surge. Furthermore, given the unpredictability of needs and demand, the market landscape is fragile. We remain committed to enabling a rapid response and equitable access for all.

Moving ahead

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, ACT-A and our role will evolve in the coming months, as indicated in the ACT-A Transition Report, with the final report of ACT-A expected by the end of April 2023. With regards to the global oxygen response, the ACT-A COVID-19 Emergency Oxygen Taskforce will soon become the Global Oxygen Alliance, chaired by Unitaid. The alliance will continue to coordinate investments, mobilize resources, and monitor the impact of efforts to ensure equitable access to oxygen – now better recognized as an essential medicine. This is an important opportunity for the global health response and Unitaid can be proud of our trailblazing efforts and leadership in this space.

The COVID-19 pandemic underlined the importance of global access. Unitaid's experience and leadership role in ACT-A, including as a co-lead of the Therapeutics Pillar and chair of the ACT-A Emergency Oxygen Taskforce, demonstrated the value of our unique role amongst partners and has allowed us to credibly position ourselves as an organization capable of shaping the future of pandemic preparedness and response (PPR).

Currently, we are closely engaging with the newly established World Bank Pandemic Fund to ensure we can contribute to the global efforts on PPR. This is an important potential opportunity as a source of new funding for our future work related to responding to global health emergencies that is now a programmatic priority in our strategy. Unitaid has formally expressed its interest in becoming an implementing entity of the Pandemic Fund, with broad support from donors and other stakeholders. We are now waiting for clarifications on the accreditation framework that should be finalized before the end of the year.

Strengthening strategic partnerships

Under our new strategy, partnership plays an even more central role in Unitaid's model, allowing us to amplify our work, to reach more people and have a greater impact. We are working across sectors and at all levels to further develop these alliances and to strengthen our strategic approach to how we collaborate.

Stronger and more strategic engagement with country stakeholders will help to ensure that the health innovations that Unitaid brings forward are better aligned with the needs of low- and middle-

income countries. It will also enable access to catalytic investments and affordable products early on. In addition, more effective country engagement can strengthen the capacity of local and national institutions including research institutions, health service and implementers, and support technology transfer and the growth of domestic and regional manufacturing. We will continue to engage with country stakeholders, as we consider and prioritize investment opportunities as well as how our calls for proposals and project selection processes can be more attractive and accessible for low- and middle-income country partners.

In the past six months, we have advanced our engagement with key country partners.

In July, we signed a cooperative agreement with the Kenyan Ministry of Health to foster access to health innovation and advance global health goals. The agreement reinforces more than ten years of cooperation to date and will further improve alignment between Unitaid investments and Kenyan health priorities. It will also enable early access to innovations and strengthen the capacity of Kenyan health services, research institutions and manufacturers. Joint efforts focus on advancing sustainable approaches to reduce the burden of HIV, TB, malaria, cervical cancer, hepatitis C and COVID-19, improving the health of women and children, increasing regional and domestic manufacturing of essential health products and strengthening pandemic preparedness and response efforts.

In August, the WHO issued a quality certification to the first African manufacturer of a key high-quality antimalarial drug, sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine (SP), used to prevent infection in pregnant women and children. With funding from Unitaid and Medicines for Malaria Venture, this pre-qualification enables Kenyan manufacturer, Universal Corporation Ltd (UCL), to support regional efforts to combat malaria through local production and enables procurement by global scale-up partners that will improve access and help strengthen Africa's ability to address malaria.

Unitaid held its Industry Engagement Forum in South Africa in November, allowing for a critical exchange on the product development pipeline and industry capabilities. The annual event is key to ensuring that Unitaid's investments in innovation are relevant and provides an opportunity to strengthen strategic partnerships with stakeholders while promoting south-south collaboration. This year's forum was an opportunity to engage stakeholders on domestic and regional manufacturing of innovative health products in Africa, showcasing Unitaid's market-based approach to enhancing capacity in this area. Our market-based approach is anchored in Unitaid's experience, including work incentivizing the development and commercialization of innovative health products, past product launches and coordination efforts during the COVID-19 response. Unitaid also presented its toolkit of access interventions, differentiated coordination of procurement and regulatory systems, and a comprehensive approach to enhancing development of regional value chains for manufacturing health products.

The Unitaid frameworks on "the differentiated coordination of regulatory and procurement mechanisms" and the "market-based approach to enhancing domestic manufacturing in Africa" were very well received and validated by more than 140 participants attending the meeting. There was a very robust discussion on the role of the WHO Regulatory and Prequalification programme, with a strong call for an evolution of WHO's role towards empowering regional and continental mechanisms, especially the African Medicines Agency.

Unitaid's session on environmentally responsible manufacturing was also well received. Unitaid plans to collaborate with UNDP and Medicines for All (M4All) to identify opportunities for maximum impact in this area, including opportunities for Unitaid to shape the agenda of the health workstreams of the Green Climate Fund. Unitaid will also promote technology transfer of cost-saving, environmentally friendly technologies to willing manufacturers, especially those in Africa, providing the right incentives where necessary.

Unitaid's roles as influencer, pathfinder and funder were acknowledged and appreciated by the delegates, especially the Africa-based manufacturers of health products. Unitaid will work with key continental institutions, development partners and industry to setup an advisory team that will help maintain the momentum generated at the forum.

Communities and civil society have a crucial role in supporting Unitaid's programmes, including in the development and implementation of projects towards scale-up of funded interventions. We are working to ensure our programmes respond to the needs of key populations and that important community engagement and advocacy activities are embedded in our work.

Through the development of Unitaid's new strategy we developed a high-level phased plan for community and civil society engagement and are working on a community and civil society engagement implementation roadmap for improved engagement of these important partners over the next five years. We are engaging in regular dialogue with the Board, partners and implementers on the contributions of community and civil society for new and current investments. To ensure a coordinated approach in relation to community engagement and fair representation across the global response, Unitaid continues to work with many partners including WHO, the Global Fund, FIND, the ACT-A Hub, and the ACT-A civil society organizations platform representatives. We recently partnered with FIND on an advocacy request for proposals for COVID-19, working with local partners to create an enabling environment for increased access to, and scaled-up use of, COVID-19 testing and linkages to treatment in low- and middle-income countries.

The World Health Organization is a key strategic partner and collaboration between WHO and Unitaid is central to Unitaid's success, based on our distinct and complementary comparative advantages. Our cooperation with WHO on technical programmes for HIV, hepatitis C, cervical cancer, tuberculosis and malaria during the 2017-2022 strategic period has informed our future collaboration. During the past strategic period, and through cooperation with Unitaid implementing partners, WHO has facilitated the design and delivery of 147 research studies to inform product approval, introduction and scale-up. A total of 59 new WHO policy recommendations or guidelines have been published with evidence from Unitaid-funded projects, and there has been an unprecedented scale-up of several game-changing health products, technologies and approaches to prevent, diagnose, treat and care for HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, cervical cancer, hepatitis C and COVID-19.

To further strengthen this strategic partnership over the 2023-2027 strategic period, together with WHO, we are publishing a roadmap that outlines our unique partnership and highlights planned strategic areas of cooperation over the next three years. With six regional offices and 150 country offices, WHO is a key partner in supporting Unitaid's ambition to increase country level cooperation.

Unitaid's market-shaping role is essential to enable scaled adoption of products and approaches by country governments and scale-up partners. Since 2016, Unitaid has accelerated the introduction and scale-up of over 150 new products that have made a difference in people's lives around the world. In the 2023-2027 strategic period we will focus on strengthening partnerships with key players to further reinforce and ensure effective product scale up.

In a recent joint event with the Global Fund, our shared network of partners validated the value of our partnership that connects innovation and scale-up, resulting in improved access. In the 2023-2027 strategic period we will continue to build on our unique partnership with the Global Fund, which is one of our leading scale-up partners, and the complementary strengths of both organizations. We have jointly committed to work together more systematically to make health innovations available and accessible to more people in low- and middle-income countries. Ongoing collaborations include a partnership, together with UNAIDS and the WHO, supporting the early introduction and access to long-acting injectable cabotegravir (CAB-LA), a highly effective HIV prevention option.

We are also engaging with PEPFAR's new leadership to strengthen our collaboration and achieve related outcomes. Areas where we have successfully collaborated to date include antiretroviral optimization, HIV self-testing and molecular testing, advanced HIV disease (AHD) and HIV coinfections. Moving forward, specific areas of mutual interest with good potential include long-acting HIV prevention, TB diagnostics and prevention, cervical cancer screening and treatment, market-shaping efforts including domestic and regional manufacturing, and joint opportunities for country engagement.

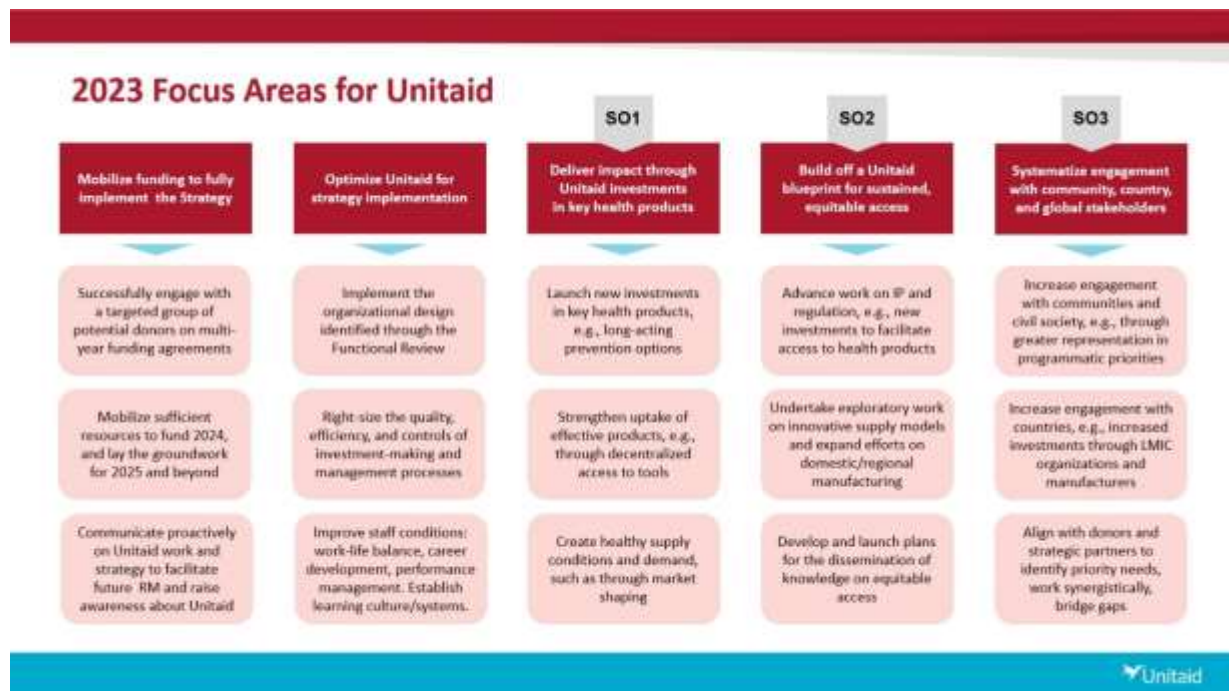
Looking Forward

As we move into 2023 and Unitaid's next strategic period gets underway, we have emerged with lessons learned from the pandemic and ready to meet the challenges ahead with renewed enthusiasm and confidence.

Mobilizing resources to support the implementation of the Strategy will continue to be a top priority for Unitaid in 2023, as will our work to optimize Unitaid as an organization to implement that Strategy effectively and efficiently. Underpinned by our Strategic Principles, we will vigorously pursue our mission to expand the reach of the best health products for those who need them most.

Our three Strategic Objectives will guide this work. While these three Objectives are interlinked, each will require its own focus and specific actions and approaches in 2023 (see *Chart 1. 2023 Focus Areas for Unitaid*, below).

Chart 1. 2023 Focus Areas for Unitaid



Unitaid has an ambitious and well-conceived strategy, with skilled staff and strong partners to execute it. In collaboration with the Board we will be unflinching in our determination to fulfil the strategy’s exacting targets and to make a lasting impact on global health.

With my best regards,

Philippe Duneton
Executive Director
Unitaid