In the context of ongoing discussions on the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, the Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), together with cosponsors and other key partners, has leveraged significant global and African platforms to advocate for “ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030”.

The work of the UN with the African Union Commission (AUC) has grown more extensive and has evolved to focus on various organs, including all Departments within the Commission—particularly Social Affairs, Peace and Security and Political Affairs. Cooperation has also been strengthened with Regional Economic Communities, the African Peer Review Mechanism and the Pan African Parliament, among others.

While this progress is welcomed, it requires streamlined planning and coordination between partners to allow for better utilisation of resources, comprehensive programming, and targeted approaches to benefit both the recipients and the contributors of the activities. UNAIDS has thus initiated the Joint UN Program of Support on AIDS for the AUC, which in effect is not only a product in itself but also a mechanism of implementing support.
Below is a summary of some of the key activities implemented jointly by UNAIDS and its relevant cosponsors to support the AUC and its key organs in advancing efforts on AIDS and other health challenges:

1- **Joint UN Program Support on AIDS for the AUC**
This framework has been used to plan and to implement all program support on HIV/AIDS with the AUC. Coordinating and delivering as one UN has allowed partners to support the African Union response to AIDS and better utilise the AIDS Watch Africa (AWA) as the leading advocacy, resource mobilisation and accountability platform on AIDS, TB and malaria. It has also facilitated the integration of all HIV-related activities in the diverse Regional Coordination Mechanisms (RCM) cluster and sub-clusters.

2- **AIDS Watch Africa, a unique instrument for advocacy and accountability**

The year 2014 saw AIDS Watch Africa further stimulating leadership and strengthening strategic partnerships with various stakeholders working on the AIDS, TB and Malaria responses, including the Pan-African Parliament, regional economic communities, national legislatures and leaders from the foremost African development institutions.

UNAIDS and other partners have assisted the AUC in strengthening AWA, through the provision of technical and financial resources for operations, staffing and capacity building. A Plan of Action for the AWA Champions has been developed, with special focus on advocacy and accountability.

3- **Accelerating the implementation of AU Roadmap**

The AU Roadmap on Shared Responsibility and Global Solidarity for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria response[2] adopted in 2012, shifts the development cooperation framework to one that is African-sourced, providing a results-based blueprint for accelerating the implementation of the AU commitments, particularly on health governance, diversified financing and access to medicines. A practical guide was developed and published to assist Member States, Regional Economic Communities and various stakeholders in implementing the Roadmap.

- The implementation of the Roadmap has been strong and positive. In eastern and southern Africa alone, 21 countries committed to end AIDS by 2030, and 16 countries have developed their own road maps to take this work forward through national ownership of

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their AIDS responses. Domestic resources have grown to more than 70% of the AIDS budget in Botswana, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa.

- As part of the mobilization of financial resources to enable countries in Central Africa to face the challenge of the double burden of morbidity and mortality caused by HIV and tuberculosis infection, IST/CA has accompanied countries such as Cameroon, DRC, Burundi and Chad in the development of Concept Notes for submission to the Global Fund.
- At a Parliamentary Roundtable\(^3\), members of the Pan African Parliament, regional and national legislative assemblies committed to advocate for the domestication and monitoring of the implementation of continental commitments on AIDS, TB and Malaria, including the Roadmap on SR-GS.

### 4- HIV and human rights

UNAIDS and UNDP have been working closely with the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights to address stigma, discrimination and other human rights violations towards people living with HIV in Africa. The joint efforts led to the adoption of the resolution on involuntary sterilization and the protection of human rights in access to HIV services. UNAIDS also provided financial and technical support to the work of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of People Living with HIV and Those at Risk, Vulnerable to and Affected by HIV established by the African Commission.

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Improving Access to essential medicines through cooperation for accelerated implementation of AU PMPA-BP

As the global health agenda expands, with the concomitant need to shift from providing affordable diagnostics and medicines for millions to billions, threats to commodity security multiply. This will be acutely felt in the AIDS response, particularly in Africa as a growing number of people receiving first-line antiretroviral treatment need to shift to second-line regimens each year, and eventually to third-line which is significantly more expensive.

Despite remarkable progress in scaling up access to medicines for HIV, malaria and tuberculosis, many people continue to lack consistent access to affordable essential medicines. The UNAIDS Gap Report (2014) highlights the shortfalls in Africa (and elsewhere), particularly for vulnerable populations that are at risk of being left behind—such as children living with HIV, who have especially poor access to HIV and tuberculosis testing and treatment.

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African leaders have established the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa and its related Business Plan (PMPA-BP), the Action Plan for the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa, the African Medicines Regulatory Harmonization (AMRH) Programme led by the NEPAD Agency, and the AU Roadmap as strategic continental frameworks for developing the pharmaceutical sector, from both the public health and industrial development perspectives. Despite strong political commitment, progress is slow.

The following UN joint initiatives were undertaken during the reporting period to further advance this agenda:

- The Executive Heads of UNAIDS, UNIDO and WHO pledged their support in a joint editorial published in the June 2014 volume of the WHO Bulletin.

- An inter-agency meeting held with AUC, NEPAD, UNAIDS, WHO and UNFPA worked out modalities of effective working mechanisms and made specific recommendations for revitalizing the PMPA-BP, in coordination with other PMPA-BP consortium of partners.

- A side event held with African Ministers of Finance and Economic Planning in partnership highlighted the opportunities for developing a high quality pharmaceutical industry in Africa, which will bring important health and economic development benefits.

• At the World Investment Forum in October, UNAIDS convened a panel with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), with the participation of the Republic of South Africa, WHO and UNIDO. The meeting explored how countries, particularly in Africa, can improve access to high-quality low cost medicines and develop their domestic production, including through renewed public–private partnership.

• A High-level Pan-African Conference on Access to Medicines and other Health Commodities is being planned under the leadership of the AUC and the Government of the Republic of South Africa, as a critical contribution to strategic actions to improve security of access to essential medicines in Africa.

• In West and Central Africa, the Joint United Nations Regional Team on HIV/AIDS (JURTA), platform assisted the ECOWAS/WAHO to design a regional strategy on AIDS (2012-2016). Similar support, led by UNAIDS and UNDP, has been provided to the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and a regional strategy has been developed. UN agencies, including UNAIDS are now pursuing support for the timely establishment of the regional ECCAS health organization (OSAC).

• The Inter-Country Support Team for Central Africa (IST/CA) contributed to the development of the Declaration of the Ministers of Health of the community of States of Central Africa on the local production of ARVs and other essential medicines. This Declaration was adopted at the meeting of the Board of Health Ministers of ECCAS held in Luanda, Angola 17 April 2014.

6- **Eliminating New Infections among Children and Keeping their Mothers alive**

• Recognizing the importance of addressing the issue of eliminating mother-to-child transmission of HIV, the African Union Commission facilitated the adaptation of the Global Plan in its *African Plan towards Elimination of New Infections among Children by 2015 and Keeping their Mothers alive*, as an accountability framework for tracking progress towards achieving the set goals of the Plan.

• The African Union has provided an important platform on which activities to end new HIV infections among children can be addressed, and assessed. Since the launch of the global initiative to end mother-to-child transmission of HIV and keep mothers alive, there has been a 43 percent reduction in new infections among children (2009-2013). And for

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the first time since the 1990s, the number of new HIV infections among children in the 21 priority countries in sub-Saharan Africa dropped to under 200 000 [170 000–230 000]. Eight countries had a 50 percent more greater decline in new infections since 2009, nine countries registered a decline of 26-50%, but four had achieved a decline of 25% or less, However, between 2012 and 2013 the pace of progress slowed down in 2013, and the AU has an active role to support countries in regaining momentum. In addition, the results show that only 22 percent of children living with HIV were receiving antiretroviral therapy, compared to over a third of adults. So children are less likely to receive treatment than their parents. This is another critical area in which the AU can have a strong role. As we enter the end of the MDG era, the AU will continue to provide leadership in the unfinished agenda to end pediatric AIDS as we know it, and to ensure that mothers living with HIV can have productive and healthy lives.

- The Organisation of African First Ladies on AIDS (OAFLA) has identified the implementation of the Global Plan as one of its leading priorities and many African First Ladies are personally committed as proponents of the Plan in their countries. In November 2014, OAFLA and UNAIDS, in association with the African Broadcast Media Partnership launched a campaign which will be broadcasted in over 150 radio stations and more than 100 TV stations across 38 African countries up until the end of 2015, as well as be launched on several social media outlets to reach communities beyond the Africa continent.

- To ensure that state-of-the art data is available to inform gender programming at country level, the East and Southern Africa region has undertaken 11 gender assessments/analyses that will provide the necessary data to inform gender programming and inclusion of specific and costed interventions for women, girls and gender equality in the ongoing review of National Strategic Plans processes.

**7- Guiding the implementation of Resolution 1983 in conflict and post-conflict settings**

- Building on UN Security Council Resolutions 1308 (2000) and 1983 (2011), calling for integration of HIV in peace-keeping and peace support operations and declaring zero tolerance for sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict settings, the AU Peace and Security Department with the support of UNAIDS, DPKO, ILO, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF, the World Bank, UNDP, and UN Women have prompted action at the highest political level condemning, sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict settings. Specific actions included joint support towards (i) the development

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of an AU Protocol detailing systematic steps and modalities of mainstreaming HIV in a standardised manner at all levels of AU Peace Support Operations; and AU Guidelines on Health, Nutrition, HIV and Disarmament, Demilitarisation and Reintegration (DDR); (ii) the hosting of meetings with military attaches; and (iii) technical contributions during Open sessions of the AU Peace and Security Council on HIV & Conflicts.

8- Key initiatives to sustain the response

- **Revitalizing the Champions for an AIDS-Free Generation**\(^{10}\)
  Ahead of the African Union Summit in January 2015, UNAIDS supported the development of a new strategy, name, brand, created all the supplemental materials and facilitated the re-launch of the Champions for an AIDS-Free Generation, a distinguished group of former presidents and influential African leaders committed to an AIDS-free generation. Individually and collectively, the Champions rally and support regional leaders in efforts towards ending the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat.

- **The Protect the Goal initiative**\(^{11}\), which was launched with support of UNAIDS at the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, became a global social movement for using the power of sport to promote the vision for zero new HIV infections, zero AIDS-related deaths and zero discrimination, end violence against women, promote social justice and protect human rights. It was the only global campaign in 2014 that was endorsed by over 20 heads of state from five continents, including many from Africa. The tour passed through the five African countries that qualified for the 2014 FIFA World Cup finals (Algeria, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria).

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\(^{10}\) [http://www.aidsfreechampions.org/about/](http://www.aidsfreechampions.org/about/)

\(^{11}\) [http://www.unaids.org.br/documentos/Proposta%20patrocinio%20ingles.pdf](http://www.unaids.org.br/documentos/Proposta%20patrocinio%20ingles.pdf)