

June 6rd, 2018

H.E. Antonio Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations

Cc: H.E. Michel Sidibé
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations
Executive Director, UNAIDS

UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board

RE: UNAIDS' management policies, processes, styles and culture

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

The Board and Executive Director of ICASO write to express our profound distress at the deepening management crisis in UNAIDS, that is disrupting the Joint Programme's ability to perform its critical work in the global AIDS response. Disappointingly, the actions taken to date by UNAIDS have been ineffective and counterproductive.

We reaffirm our repugnance for all forms of workplace harassment and discrimination, including the sexual harassment of and violence towards employees by fellow employees and supervisors. Any such actions, as well as the environments that enable them, are fundamentally at odds with human rights-based responses to AIDS, and cannot be tolerated.

Our concern is the collapse of trust in the management of UNAIDS, and in particular, its failure to address allegations of sexual harassment, bullying, mismanagement and cronyism. It is not our place to comment on the specific individual sexual harassment cases that have been raised.

We call on you, in conjunction with the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB), to appoint a fully independent and transparent expert investigation into UNAIDS' management policies, processes, styles and culture. The investigation panel should have exceptional human resource and legal expertise. The panel should be appointed by you, report to you, and be composed of relevant human resource and legal experts familiar with the governing regulations of international bodies. As a matter of accountability and natural justice, it cannot report to the UNAIDS Executive Director, senior

management, or their staff. Neither should the review panel's members be appointed nor recommended by anyone in the UNAIDS Secretariat.

It should report to you promptly and publicly with clear recommendations on the way forward, and we urge you and the PCB to agree, in advance, to implement any forthcoming recommendations.

Many of our partners in the global AIDS movement have called for the resignation of UNAIDS Executive Director, Michel Sidibé, as a first step to addressing this unfolding tragedy. Others believe Mr Sidibé should stay and lead the organization's revitalization and renewal. What pains us deeply is that the question of his continued leadership has inflamed divisions across the international response to AIDS and is yet a further distraction to the urgent and necessary work to achieve the UNAIDS targets of 90-90-90.

We recognize and honor the achievements of UNAIDS under Mr Sidibé's leadership – and indeed his own personal bravery, particularly his outspoken support for key populations, including African LGBTI communities with African leaders. We have been proud to work with him in our collective fight against the global AIDS epidemic.

Yet, we must call out and abhor the reports of any attempts by Mr Sidibé's staff, colleagues or supporters to threaten, bully or otherwise force civil society activists around the world to support his continued leadership of UNAIDS.

What is not in doubt is that UNAIDS is in crisis. While the integrity and capacity of an organization's leadership are crucial, the concerns go way beyond one individual.

That is why we are calling for an independent, authoritative and transparent review of UNAIDS management, that can make clear recommendations to yourself and the UNAIDS PCB.

We regret having to send this letter, without prejudice, but the seriousness of the situation demands clear and effective action – that we believe can only come from you.

On behalf of the ICASO Board of Directors

Sincerely,

Marama Mullen
Chair of Board
ICASO