

# STATEMENT BY KENYAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AGAINST THE PROPOSED SUNSETTING OF UNAIDS BY 2026

*A call to preserve Global Leadership in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS*

*Date: September 30, 2025, Nairobi, Kenya*

## INTRODUCTION

We, the undersigned civil society organizations in Kenya, express our profound alarm and unequivocal opposition to the proposal contained in the UN Secretary-General's UN80 Initiative report "Shifting Paradigms: United to Deliver," which plans to "sunset UNAIDS by the end of 2026." The proposal represents a serious betrayal of millions of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, particularly in Kenya and across sub-Saharan Africa, where the burden of the epidemic remains highest. Further, it represents a fundamental misunderstanding of the current state of the HIV epidemic and the unique role that UNAIDS plays in the global response. **AIDS is not over; moreover, new HIV infections remain unacceptably high**, with young people especially adolescent girls and young women facing a disproportionate risk, making prevention a central priority.

## OUR POSITION

**We categorically reject the proposal to dismantle UNAIDS in 2026.** This decision would be catastrophic for global HIV response at a time when the epidemic is far from over and requires sustained, coordinated international leadership.

## WHY THE PROPOSAL IS FUNDAMENTALLY FLAWED

### 1. Undermines the 2030 Goal to End AIDS

The proposal directly contradicts the global commitment to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. With the HIV response already in crisis and funding cuts threatening progress, dismantling UNAIDS now would be "profoundly dangerous and a betrayal of the global goal to end AIDS by 2030."

### 2. Threatens Lives and Reverses Progress

Following dramatic cuts in global HIV funding this year, UNAIDS has warned that an additional 4.2 million people are expected to die of AIDS-related illnesses over the next four years, leaving an extra 3 million children orphaned, and an additional 6.6 million people will newly acquire HIV. Dismantling UNAIDS would only accelerate this humanitarian catastrophe.

### 3. Abandons Vulnerable Communities

UNAIDS is the only UN agency that places communities and civil society at the heart of its mandate and governance structure. It provides crucial "advocacy for the health and rights of the communities most impacted by the AIDS pandemic – men who have sex with men, transgender people, sex workers, people who use drugs and people in prison and other enclosed settings – in an era where they are under increasingly direct assault."

### 4. Lacks Clear Transition Plan

The proposal fails to adequately address:

- Who will assume UNAIDS' unique coordinating role?
- How will community-centered approaches be maintained?
- What mechanisms will ensure continued advocacy for key populations?
- How will this transition be managed without disrupting existing programs?

### 5. Contradicts Sustainable Development Goals

The proposal "risks derailing the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 3 on health and SDG 10 on reducing inequalities."

## OUR DEMANDS

We call upon The UN Secretary-General to:

1. **Withdraw the proposal** to sunset UNAIDS by 2026
2. **Engage directly with civil society**, including Kenyan organizations, to understand the real-world implications of this decision
3. **Commit to strengthening UNAIDS** rather than dismantling it
4. **Ensure any future reforms** enhance rather than undermine the HIV response

**UN Member States to:**

1. **Actively oppose** the premature closure of UNAIDS
2. **Increase rather than decrease** funding for UNAIDS and global HIV response
3. **Reaffirm commitment** to ending AIDS by 2030
4. **Ensure African voices** are heard in any discussions about UNAIDS' future

**The UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board to:**

1. **Reject any accelerated timeline** for UNAIDS closure
2. **Strengthen UNAIDS' mandate** to better serve communities
3. **Ensure meaningful participation** of civil society in all decisions

### The Kenyan Government to:

1. **Officially oppose** the proposal to sunset UNAIDS
2. **Mobilize other African governments** to take a unified stance
3. **Increase domestic HIV funding** while maintaining international support

## CONCLUSION

**We stand in solidarity with civil society organizations worldwide** who oppose this dangerous proposal. The fight against AIDS is not over, and dismantling the coordinating body at this critical juncture would cost lives and reverse decades of progress.

*This statement is endorsed by Kenyan civil society organizations committed to ending HIV/AIDS and ensuring that no one is left behind in the global response.*

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