

## Section 2: Introduction to the 'Three Ones'

"[The] increase in resources and a corresponding increase in the number of actors at country level often overwhelm national efforts to coordinate an inclusive and multisectoral response based on national priorities. The result is vertical and piecemeal actions against AIDS that are often duplicative and rarely sustainable.<sup>7</sup>"



Beneficiaries of Projet Orange, Burkina Faso

Following consultations in 2003 with African governments, multilateral and bilateral agencies, and a number of other stakeholders, a set of three key principles – the '**Three Ones**' – were developed. These principles apply to all stakeholders with the aim of strengthening coordination of national responses to HIV/AIDS. They encourage each country to have:

1. **One** agreed HIV/AIDS Action Framework that provides the basis for coordinating the work of all partners.
2. **One** National AIDS Coordinating Authority, with a broad-based multi-sectoral mandate.
3. **One** agreed country-level Monitoring and Evaluation System.

In April 2004, at the High-Level Meeting 'Consultation on Harmonisation of International AIDS Funding' in Washington DC, USA, bilateral and multilateral agencies, meeting with national leaders, agreed to apply the 'Three Ones' principles at the country level and tasked UNAIDS to act as coordinator and watchdog.

Approaches for implementing the 'Three Ones' principles have subsequently been developed through a series of national, regional and international consultations. These have included multi-sectoral consultations and information-gathering exercises coordinated by UNAIDS<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> UNAIDS, The 'Three Ones' Key Principles, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> See Annex 1 for a timeline of key events.

“The myriad of epidemiological, political, economic and social situations in countries rules out the production of a standardized blueprint or prescription for adherence to the ‘Three Ones’. Nonetheless, each of these three pillars is built by a set of principles for national authorities and their partners to follow. These principles are offered to countries as a basis for optimizing roles and relationships in the fight against HIV/AIDS.”

The ‘Three Ones’ key principles include:

**I. One agreed AIDS action framework that forms the basis for coordinating the work of all partners**

An agreed, common AIDS action framework is a basic element for coordination across partnerships and funding mechanisms, and for the effective functioning of a national AIDS coordinating authority. Such a framework requires:

- **Clear priorities** for resource allocation and accountability, making it possible to link priorities, resource flows and outcomes/results.
- **Milestones and targets** for reaching universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support.
- **Regular joint reviews** and consultations on progress that include all partners.
- **Encouragement to the community sector, the private sector and other civil society partners** to take on larger roles in service delivery.
- **Commitment by external support agencies** to coordinate within the AIDS action framework in a way that is consistent with their own mandates.
- **Links with poverty-reduction and development frameworks**, as well as associated partnership arrangements.



Villagers welcome a mobile testing team, Zambia

## II. One national AIDS coordinating authority with a broad-based multi-sector mandate

Convening all partners around one common action framework requires a national coordinating authority. The legitimacy and effectiveness of such an authority is dependent on the following principles:

- **Legal status and a formal mandate** that reflects national ownership, broad and inclusive membership and clear lines of authority and accountability.
- **A clearly defined role** to coordinate the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the national AIDS action framework in an accountable and transparent manner. This includes coordinating requests for financing according to agreed national priorities to achieve universal access, while leaving financial management and implementation to other entities.
- **Democratic oversight** by legislative authorities, including regular information sharing and reporting.
- **Commitment to an inclusive national AIDS response** that welcomes the full participation of the community sector, especially people living with HIV, the private sector and other civil society organisations, and recognises the mandates and contributions of partnership and funding mechanisms.
- **Acceptance and respect by all stakeholders** for the national AIDS action framework and the leadership role of the national AIDS coordinating authority as the basis for cooperation that will enhance rather than constrain their efforts.
- **Establishment of a broad-based national partnership forum** that bridges the policy and umbrella functions of the national AIDS coordinating authority and the actual implementation of the AIDS action framework.

## III. One agreed monitoring and evaluation system

The absence of an operational common monitoring and evaluation system in most countries has hampered efforts to maximise existing capacity for quality assurance, national oversight and informed policy adaptation. As a result, countries and their supporters may misjudge national priorities and not be able to properly review performance and achievements in moving towards universal access. Principles to forge stronger national monitoring and evaluation frameworks include:

- **Global-level alignment of monitoring and evaluation needs** around the indicators linked to the United Nations Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and additional core elements that emphasise performance and accountability.
- **Agreement among stakeholders for a core national monitoring and evaluation system** that provides high-quality data for analysing country performance on the national AIDS action framework.
- **National and external investment** in building essential human capacity and infrastructure to meet national monitoring and evaluation needs<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> UNAIDS, The 'Three Ones' Key Principles, 2004.