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Press release

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German government must help fund UNAIDS

UNAIDS Director Winnie Byanyima meets with representatives of German civil society. Funding for the UN programme is not secured for the coming years. So far, no budget line in the 2023 federal budget.

UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima met with members of German civil society in Berlin today. At an on-site meeting at the Berliner Aidshilfe, she spoke with representatives of AIDS Action Europe, Aktionsbündnis gegen AIDS and Deutsche Aidshilfe, as well as community representatives, to exchange views on challenges and issues.

"It has been such an inspiration to see German civil society's commitment to accelerate the HIV response worldwide through innovation and cooperation. German civil society are clear that overcoming the AIDS crisis is essential to global health security and pandemic preparedness. We can end the AIDS pandemic: Germany's leadership is key to achieving it."

UNAIDS is the joint United Nations programme launched in 1994 by the international community to take a joint and focused approach to the then new epidemic.

UNAIDS is of central importance for global HIV work, also for other organisations such as the Global Fund. For example, UNAIDS provides global data on the epidemiological spread of HIV, which can then be used as a basis for implementing targeted programmes at country level that are geared to specific needs.

UNAIDS develops global strategies against HIV/AIDS and relies on scientifically based approaches, while at the same time adhering to principles such as human rights orientation, the inclusion of people living with HIV and groups particularly affected by HIV.

Funding deteriorates

Although the importance of UNAIDS is undisputed, the funding of the programme has continued to deteriorate in recent years: while in 2012 213 million US dollars were available, in 2021 it was only 165 million US dollars - with considerable consequences for the programme.

During this period, the federal government never provided more than one to three percent of UNAIDS' core funding: In 2022, it was just six million euros. There is currently not even a budget line for UNAIDS in the draft 2023 federal budget.

"This is absolutely unacceptable," says Sylvia Urban, Executive Director of Action against AIDS Germany and Deutsche Aidshilfe. "An adequate contribution must be a fixed part of the federal budget now and in the future. Contributions to UNAIDS must not be called into question every year, so that the existence of the programme remains sustainable," Urban continued.

"We therefore call on the Federal Ministry of Health and the parliamentarians to act and to provide an adequate contribution to the UNAIDS core budget against the background of the aggravated situation," Urban continued. This should in no way fall short of last year's pledged funds. Civil society's demand is currently at least 25 million euros annually for the UNAIDS core budget.

"Germany is chairing the coordination meetings of the UNAIDS programme for the next two years. This is a great privilege and also points to the very good substantive support of UNAIDS by the Federal Government and the staff* of the ministries involved. Therefore, Germany must also assume responsibility accordingly," adds Urban.

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