

Niger
July, 2008

Country Situation

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There was, up to September 2007, a two fold responsibility in the response to AIDS. Currently, the National Council for the Response to AIDS (CNLS) and its executive secretariat, Intersectoral Coordination for the response to STI/HIV/AIDS, depend on the presidency. The former National Strategic Framework has been complete since the end of 2006. With the changes at the level of management of the response, it was decided to draw up a new framework for the period 2008-2012, validated at the end of November 2007. Up until recently, there was no framework for monitoring and evaluation in Niger. UNAIDS by means of the Technical Support Mechanism has supported its definition since the beginning of September, which should be validated before the end of February 2008.

Stoppage of the duality at the head of the response between the presidency and primature (Office of the Prime Minister) and changes at the level of Intersectoral Coordination of the Response against STI/HIV/AIDS have created an environment where a significant improvement in the response is possible.

An inventory has identified eleven key partners in the response to HIV/AIDS in Niger. Half of the partners have national coverage. Belgian Technical Cooperation heads the list for coordination of partners in the health sector. The response to HIV is not yet sufficiently represented.

In total, 0.6% of primary pupils and theoretically 100% of secondary pupils receive education on HIV/AIDS. Approximately 40% of young girls have sexual relations before the age of 15. Limitation of sexual relations to one faithful partner were cited by 74% of women as a means of prevention and condoms were cited by 55%. 97% of women have never carried out the HIV screening test. Determining factors are the low-level of education, economic dependence, early sexual relations and marriage, weight of socio-cultural factors. Furthermore, women are especially faced with problems of the weakness of their socio-economic and legal status that keeps them in a state of dependence with regard to men.

A nearly complete absence of historical data on prevalence in at-risk groups limits actions in their favour.

The response to HIV is entirely within the Accelerated Development Strategy for the Reduction of Poverty (SDRP) 2008-2012 of the government which, among others, has the aim of guaranteeing access of poor people to basic social services.

UNAIDS activities at country level during 2007

With regard to universal access to prevention, treatment and care and support, UNAIDS and its cosponsors have supported the national consultation and definition of national targets. These targets were included in the new National Strategic Framework 2008-2012.

The elaboration or rather the transformation of the National Strategic Framework 2007-2011, never validated, and the National Strategic Framework 2008-2012, was supported.

Support for the elaboration of a monitoring and evaluation framework with regard to the National Strategic Framework has begun. The Technical Support Mechanism sent a consultant at the request of the National Coordinator for Intersectoral Coordination for the Response against STI/HIV/AIDS. Local costs are also met by UNAIDS.

The development of a preliminary UNGASS report was technically supported by an external consultant and financially supported.

The organization of the World Day for the Response to AIDS was technically and financially supported by UNAIDS and its cosponsors.

The participation of PLHIV in the Ouagadougou forum was supported by UNAIDS and its cosponsors.

The UNAIDS Technical Work Group exists and meets regularly but its transformation into a joint team, its training and definition of a common programme did not take place in 2007. The arrival of a UNAIDS country coordinator in mid-August 2007 should enable more alignment with the strategic options of Niger, contained in the National Strategic Framework and harmonizing our interventions more by means of a common programme.

UNAIDS achievements at country level during 2007

Monitoring and evaluation

Niger will submit a UNGASS report for the first time in January 2008. UNAIDS has actively supported this process by making a consultant available who has supported the organization of the workshop for orientation and writing of a narrative report. We have also supported the participation of two people from Intersectoral Coordination of the Response to STI/HIV/AIDS at the regional workshop on monitoring and evaluation in Dakar. Finally, local costs related to this activity were met.

Intersectoral Coordination of the Response to HIV/AIDS used this dynamic to work from the end of 2008 on a M&E plan. UNAIDS supported the sending by the Technical Support Mechanism of a consultant to support these local efforts and local costs were met out of locally available funds.

National strategic and operational planning

An initial effort, supported by UNAIDS and co-sponsors leading to a National Strategic Framework 2007-2011 has not given the expected result. Disagreements among key individuals from the response were too significant.

Two-headed institutions were abolished in September 2007. Institutions now depend on the presidency. The National Strategic Framework 2008-2011 has adapted to this new situation and should give more consideration to priority groups.

The dynamic around UNGASS 2008 has enabled the Intersectoral Coordination for the Response to HIV/AIDS to gather focal points from other sectoral units. Within a reasonable deadline these units should mobilize their sectors in the response more.

The coordinator of Intersectoral Coordination of the Response to STI/HIV/AIDS has requested the following support on the part of the World Bank/UNAIDS:

- ▶ Submitting the new National Strategic Framework 2008-2012 to ASAP for their constructive criticism.
- ▶ Very quickly planning a consultancy to support refining of this framework and its translation into operational documents (by sectors among others) leading to correct definition of targets.
- ▶ Planning support for budgeting as soon as possible.

This process should be completed at the end of the first quarter of 2008.

Main challenges / activities for 2008

In general, constructive remarks on help with the report from the joint WB/UNAIDS mission in August 2007 created opportunities for the response to HIV.

The following recommendations seem essential and their implementation was started or should be improved:

- ▶ Institutional bicephalism was abolished in September 2007. Institutions now depend on the presidency.
- ▶ The National Strategic Framework is adapted to this new situation and takes more consideration of priority groups.
- ▶ Knowledge of the epidemic and its determining factors should be improved.
- ▶ Niger will submit a UNGASS report for the first-time.
- ▶ Intersectoral Coordination for the Response to HIV/AIDS has used this dynamic to lean towards a M&E framework to be completed before the end of February.
- ▶ In the first-quarter of 2008 and with the support of UNAIDS/ASAP-WB priority sectoral units should target and budget their interventions better.
- ▶ CSO should ensure their role in the response to HIV.

Efforts in progress need to be supported. Resumption and the new leadership of the presidency and government will be maintained and strengthened more.