



Monitoring of the performance in governmental responses to national, regional, continental and global HIV/AIDS commitments : Experiences and lessons learned from SADC countries

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Outline of the presentation

- Introduction
- The scope and quality of appropriate M & E data available from member states
- Perceived 'ownership' of M & E data by members states and relevance of indicators
- Impact of governance ratings on government performance
- Conclusions

Introduction

- Over the past few years SADC Heads of State or Government and Ministers of Health have signed, amongst others, a number of regional, continental and global declarations related to HIV/AIDS such as:
 - *The Maseru Declaration on HIV and AIDS that prioritized prevention and social mobilization as a regional priority for the SADC region (2003)*
 - *The Maputo Declaration by African Ministers of Health that efforts be made to strengthen the national responses to accelerate HIV Prevention (2005)*
 - *Brazzaville Commitment calling on countries to scale up towards Universal Access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010 (2006)*
 - *Abuja Declaration of 2006*
 - *The 2006 Political Declaration of the United Nations General Assembly High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS.*

Introduction (contd)

- Each of these declarations have set some targets that must be achieved by different countries.
- In addition to the international declarations, most countries have also developed their own national strategic plans on HIV/AIDS.
- Each of these declarations and national strategic plans on HIV/AIDS require countries to provide some feedback on how well each one of them is doing.

Introduction (contd)

- This requires the development of appropriate indicators as well as the use of M & E to populate them.
- One of the major challenges in getting an accurate picture of how well individual countries are performing has been both the multiplicity of indicators and the lack of good quality M & E data.

Introduction (contd)

- In this presentation, I will share some of my thoughts about the following issues:
 - the extent to which the data that countries report to UNAIDS in the UNGASS process truly reflect countries' actual response to AIDS;
 - experiences in the SADC region in terms of the perceived 'ownership' by members states and relevance of indicators in terms of M & E of national responses to HIV/AIDS; and
 - how initiatives such as the AAI scorecard and Mo Ibrahim Index of governance ratings impact on government performance.

The scope and quality of appropriate M & E data available from member states

- To a large extent, actually the data that countries report to UNAIDS in the UNGASS process truly reflect countries' actual response to AIDS.
- This is partly due to the harmonisation of both some policies and best practices of data collection methods that are applied by each member state. This is true for example with modelling of ANC surveillance data.
- Not only do best practices in terms of how research methods are used and also more importantly about how to compute the appropriate indicators. This is achieved through technical assistance provided by some international organisations especially UNAIDS.

The scope and quality of appropriate M & E data available from member states (contd)

- However, at times the inadequacy and also poor quality of data that is available to a member state is indeed a source of concern as there are often some major challenges faced when the M & E information needed is collected.

Data on some indicators is simply lacking for the following reasons:

- The costs involved in collecting the data is prohibitive.
- An example of this includes population-based surveys which are very expensive to run.
- Luckily, some of the costs have been borne out by international donors such as PEPFAR in the case of the 2008 population-based HIV/AIDS in South Africa.

The scope and quality of appropriate M & E data available from member states (contd)

- There is a lack of appropriate research skills required to collect the information.
- Luckily, most of the data are collected collaboratively with international experts of organisations providing the necessary technical assistance.
- An example of this also includes population-based surveys which require excellent research skills of how to conduct large scale surveys.
 - Organisations like ORC Macro International and HSRC provide technical assistance to member states to undertake population-based HIV surveillance.

The scope and quality of appropriate M & E data available from member states (contd)

- Extensive levels of conservatism with regards to undertaking research on taboo subjects such as targeting most at risk populations such as CSW and MSM.
- Therefore, as a consequence some critical indicators on some key drivers of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in some member states are not populated at all.

Perceived 'ownership' of M & E data by members states and relevance of indicators

- Although there is generally some agreement on the indicators due to the consultative and/or participatory processes involved in their development, until recently how the statistics released annually by UNAIDS in the AIDS Update were arrived at was shrouded in controversy.
- This was because the UNAIDS Head Office collected the data on HIV/AIDS from appropriate agencies in member states and together with epidemiologists from the various member states completed the computations in Geneva.

Perceived 'ownership' of M & E data by members states and relevance of indicators (contd)

- Some member states especially in the SADC region disowned the final statistics as they were different from some of the raw results sent to UNAIDS by each country.
- In response to the concerns raised by some member states, the SADC HIV/AIDS Unit in collaboration with the UNAIDS RST-ESA have during the past 3-4 years devised a new approach whereby the data from member states are used at regional level to first produce a SADC regional HIV/AIDS annual progress report and then this information is passed on to UNAIDS in Geneva to include in the annual updates on the epidemic.

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Perceived 'ownership' of M & E data by members states and relevance of indicators (contd)

- It appears that this new approach has resulted in member states gaining more acceptance of the data than was the case previously.
- It is possible that a similar more bottom-up approach to populating the AAI scorecard might also be able to make it to gain more widespread acceptance by member states in the near future than might be the case at the moment.

Impact of governance ratings impact on government performance

- It is clearly too early to determine the impact of relatively new initiatives such as the AAI scorecard and Mo Ibrahim Index of governance ratings impact on government performance.
- Both indices add an important dimension, namely, the inclusion of the assessment by civil society in addition to that by each government.

Impact of governance ratings impact on government performance (contd)

- However, this makes it less objective at times due to differences in levels of freedom enjoyed by citizens of different countries especially how free civil society is able to critique their own governments but this should still be acknowledged as a step in the right direction.
- A critical gap is the exclusion of massive amounts of M & E data collected from projects which are funded by different donors in some member states often without sharing it with the respective national data collecting agencies including National AIDS Councils.

Impact of governance ratings impact on government performance

(contd)

- It is gratifying that some donors have either pooled their resources together including M & E or are sharing previously highly secretive M & E data from projects which they funded separately by themselves.
- This should enable a more coordinated response by member states and more accurate reflection on the impact of most of the AIDS programmes in each country.

Conclusions

- The presentation has shown the following:
 - Although some gaps do exist, in general the data that countries report to UNAIDS in the UNGASS process and other structures generally truly reflect the countries' actual response to AIDS;
 - Most indicators used in terms of M & E of national responses to HIV/AIDS are generally relevant but there is however a need for a more bottom-up process to improve the perception of 'ownership' of M&E data by members states; and

Conclusions (contd)

- It is clearly too early to determine how new initiatives such as the AAI scorecard and Mo Ibrahim Index of governance ratings impact on government performance but their inclusion of feedback from civil society and funders in addition to governments will most likely increase their impact in the near future.
- It is important to conduct continuous M & E of the procedures used by new initiatives such as the AAI scorecard and Mo Ibrahim Index of governance ratings to make them more valid and acceptable to member states.

