



PAEDIATRIC HIV AND TB LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Paediatric HIV and TB Leadership Dialogue

Casina Pio IV, Vatican City State

3 – 4 February 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

On 3 and 4 February 2025, the Pontifical Academy for Life and the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, hosted the *Paediatric HIV and TB Leadership Dialogue* at Casina Pio IV (Pontifical Academy of Sciences) in Vatican City. The event was co-organized by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF), in partnership with Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs).

The Dialogue brought together 70 key leaders from diagnostic and pharmaceutical companies, multilateral organizations, governments, regulatory agencies, faith-based organizations, civil society, and community organizations, all directly engaged in paediatric HIV and TB services and broader child health initiatives. Participants engaged in a comprehensive, solutions-oriented discussion on the challenges and opportunities in paediatric HIV, TB, and broader child health. This Dialogue built on previous high-level gatherings held at the Vatican, all aimed at identifying solutions and fostering collaborations to accelerate the research, development, introduction, rollout out of and access to optimal HIV and TB diagnostics and treatment tools and strategies for children and their mothers.

During a period of profound instability in global health and development, marked by disruptions to programs and established frameworks, the meeting provided an opportunity for strategic reflection on priority actions to tackle HIV and TB in children. Given the current challenges in global health governance, the dialogue was more crucial than ever, providing a platform to realign priorities, foster collaborations and commit to concrete solutions for the health of children and mothers in a rapidly shifting landscape.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

The following points were identified as critical amid the current challenges facing global health:

- The dialogue underscored the urgency of challenging the status quo, moving beyond outdated structures, and embracing transformative change to build a more effective, accountable, and child-centered global health response. As the global health

ecosystem undergoes profound shifts, it is essential to place children at the very center, as both the starting point and ultimate goal of our efforts.

- A fundamental shift is needed in how success is measured. The emphasis must move beyond institutional sustainability and focus instead on tangible results, where outcomes are defined by the number of children's lives saved, rather than the continued existence of organizations. The global response must be guided by bold and clear targets that move beyond technical frameworks toward zero new infections, zero deaths, and zero stigma.
- Current reorganization efforts across the global health and development sectors were seen as an opportunity to improve efficiency, consolidate resources, and create more responsive and resilient models. However, stakeholders also acknowledged the severe consequences of recent abrupt decisions, which are leading to loss of life, the resurgence of infections, and the erosion of hard-won progress over the years. There was a clear call to move beyond prolonged debates on reforming global health institutions and to focus on concrete, forward-looking actions.
- The discussions reinforced that this moment demands urgent and transformative change, and it called for a new approach to global health leadership through inclusive and collaborative models. This includes supporting and engaging in multi-stakeholder platforms that bring together heads of state from the Global South alongside leaders from industry, faith-based organizations, civil society, and other sectors. These platforms must foster meaningful collaboration, leverage digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, and reshape how we respond to health crises affecting children and mothers.
- Stakeholders underscored the urgent need to rethink traditional funding models amid the current global health financing crisis. They called for prioritizing direct investments at the country level to accelerate the transition of health programs toward national ownership and sustainability. At the same time, there was a strong push to rebalance global health leadership by shifting decision-making closer to high-burden countries, with meaningful engagement from heads of state, faith leaders, civil society, and community actors. Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of broadening private sector partnerships, beyond pharmaceuticals, to harness innovation from sectors such as digital technology and artificial intelligence, driving new solutions and efficiencies in the paediatric HIV and TB response. Achieving this shift will require stronger political commitment and targeted advocacy to unlock resources, remove structural barriers, and ensure equitable access to life-saving interventions for children and mothers.
- The Rome Platform was recognized as a valuable space for fostering multisectoral collaboration. Stakeholders committed to specific solutions aimed at accelerating access to optimal HIV and TB medicines and diagnostics for children. These commitments are outlined in the 2025 *Rome Action Plan on Pediatric HIV and TB*. The "asks", put forward by stakeholders, target key barriers, including regulatory

delays, supply chain inefficiencies, fragmented financing, and the lack of sustainable market incentives for paediatric formulations and diagnostics. Stakeholders reflected on the potential for this platform to expand its scope to other disease areas affecting children and mothers.

- Innovation remains a key driver of progress, particularly in an era of diminishing resources. Research and development efforts must be targeted, strategic, streamlined and linked to robust access plans to ensure that new diagnostics, treatments, and service delivery models remain high-quality, efficient, and accessible. While scientific advancements have significantly improved paediatric HIV and TB care, many children still lack access to early diagnosis and optimal treatment. Renewed and sustained leadership, innovative financing, and community-driven solutions are key to overcome access barriers in prevention, diagnosis, and treatment for children affected by HIV and TB.
- Integrated child health approaches and models of care were identified as critical for success, emphasizing the need to move away from siloed approaches. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of: i) consolidating fragmented supply chain to guarantee uninterrupted access to medications and diagnostic products; ii) Harmonizing regulatory processes and frameworks across health sectors to accelerate access to new technologies and treatments; iii) Ensuring paediatric R&D is no longer an afterthought, but rather a central focus and the starting point in global health strategies and interventions; iv) Adopting sustainable service delivery models that emphasize long-term impact and country ownership.
- Advocacy was recognized as a critical mechanism for creating momentum and holding governments and other stakeholders accountable for their commitments. It is important to engage more intentionally with faith and community leaders and networks to mobilize public awareness and ensuring financial commitments to children's health. In addition, including youth and digital activists to amplify awareness and policy action and developing a bold and compelling narrative for paediatric HIV and TB, child and maternal health should be prioritized.

Throughout the discussions, the words of Pope Francis served as a moral compass, reinforcing the responsibility to protect the most vulnerable. His message on January 9, 2025, emphasized: *"Too often, the voices of the most fragile are ignored, the cries of children suffering from war, violence, hunger, and disease are left unheard. We must act with hope, compassion, and determination to bring them justice and dignity."* Similarly, his address on World Children's Day 2024 was a call to action: *"Every child is a precious gift, entrusted to us by God. It is our duty to ensure that they receive the care and protection they deserve."* These reminders underscore the fact that addressing paediatric HIV and TB, and promoting the right of each child is not just a medical obligation but a moral one.

PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

This meeting marks not an endpoint but the beginning of a process that will require ongoing engagement, decisive action, and continuous collaboration.

The Steering Group of the Leadership Dialogueⁱ proposes moving forward with two interconnected discussions:

1. **Technical follow-up to advance key solutions and commitments identified during the Leadership Dialogue and outlined in the Rome Action Plan 2025.** This will include biannual progress webinars and targeted bilateral engagements throughout 2025. Accountability will remain at the core of the Rome Platform, with the Steering Group leading the monitoring and evaluation of progress toward the commitments set out in the 2025 Action Plan.
2. **Ad hoc champions' group** with three main objectives:
 - **Championing Children's Health** by advancing strategies to position child health, beginning with paediatric HIV and TB, as a core priority within broader global health agendas and discussions. This includes developing a strong and unified narrative that fosters solidarity and clearly conveys the urgency and critical importance of investing in children's health.
 - **Implementing the Recommendations from the Leadership Dialogue held at the Vatican** and ensuring they are integrated into wider global health discussions and policy frameworks.
 - **Further Reflecting on a New Global Health Leadership that prioritizes Children.** This includes examining and further framing "a new approach to global health leadership", such as a multi-stakeholder platform or Global Leaders Network that can redefine how we lead and coordinate responses to global health challenges.

[NOTE: A full report accompanies this Executive Summary. The full report summarizes key takeaways, recommendations, and next steps discussed at the Leadership Dialogue on Paediatric HIV and TB convened by the Vatican Academy for Life and the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development in February 2025. The full report includes an annex section with: a) The Rome Paediatric HIV and TB Action Plan 2025, outlining stakeholder commitments and asks to accelerate research and development (R&D), introduction, rollout, and access to optimal HIV and TB diagnostics, treatment products, and strategies; b) Minutes of the two-day Leadership Dialogue, detailing key challenges, solutions, opportunities, and recommendations discussed; c) A list of participants involved in the Dialogue; c) A link to the presentations delivered during the meeting].

ⁱ The Steering Group of the Leadership Dialogue is composed by: Monsignor Robert J Vitillo, Dr Meg Doherty, Prof. Sandy Thurman, Mr. Chip Lyons, Ms. Catherine Connor, Mr. David Ruiz Villafraña, Mrs. Francesca Merico