

Geneva, 28 September 2023

28TH MEETING OF THE RBM PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Zoom

Tuesday 12 September 2023, 15.00-18.00 CET

ATTENDANCE LIST

[See Annex 1](#)

The Board Vice Chair welcomed the participants to the meeting.

I DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: STATUS AND UPDATES OF 1 SEPTEMBER 2023 RBM/B28/2023/RP01

The Board Vice Chair asked if anyone had any conflicts of interests to declare.

Ms Chaka Chaka reiterated the positions held in various organisations as per the DoI submitted. **The Board Members** did not declare any conflicts preventing participation in the meeting.

The Board Members took note of this information.

II ADOPTION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA CORRIGENDUM VERSION 2 OF 11 SEPTEMBER 2023 RBM/B28/2023/DP01

[See Annex 2](#)

Adoption of the 28th Board meeting agenda corrigendum

The RBM Partnership to End Malaria Board approved the 28th RBM Partnership Board agenda corrigendum dated 11 September 2023.

a Apologies

The Board Vice Chair announced that apologies had been received from Drs Das, Ngamije and Ms Djibo.

The Board Members took note of this information.

b List of special invitees & observers RBM/B28/2023/RP02

The Board Members had not raised any issues or objections with the Board Chair in advance of the meeting.

**III 27TH BOARD MEETING MINUTES AND VOTING
SINCE LAST MEETING OF 29 AUGUST 2023**

RBM/B28/2023/RP03

The Board Members took note of the 27th Board meeting minutes and voting since the last meeting.

a Feedback on the agreed eight 27th Board meeting decision points

[*See Annex 3*](#)

The Board Vice Chair recalled the 27th Board meeting decision points and invited the CEO and the Finance Committee Chair to provide updates as relevant. Notably:

RBM/B27/2023/DP03 – Establishment of a Finance Committee

The Finance Committee Chair recalled the proposal to the Board to create a Strategy Committee shared under pre-read RBM/B28/2023/DP04, including the possible reduction in the Finance Committee membership of 10. **The Board Vice Chair** echoed this suggestion to allow for a more balanced distribution of the Board's workload.

RBM/B27/2023/DP04 – Weakness in resource mobilisation and reconstitution of reserves

The Finance Committee Chair confirmed that the Finance Committee had been working on the reconstitution of the reserves for the RBM Secretariat. A consultant had been recruited to support the Secretariat in the development of a resource mobilisation plan.

RBM/B27/2023/DP05 – Resource mobilisation support

The CEO confirmed that, as part of the ongoing resource mobilisation efforts, opportunities for the International Development Association (IDA) funds were being explored with a focus on the High Burden High Impact (HBHI) countries. He recalled the bilateral discussions on the IDA funds and domestic resources with the Ministers of Health on the sidelines of the 73rd session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa in Botswana and reported that a comprehensive update would be provided to the Board at its next meeting.

RBM/B27/2023/DP07 – Response to Global Fund elevation of malaria risk category

The CEO recalled that a letter on the RBM Partnership's response to the Global Fund's elevation of malaria risk category had been sent, with a copy forwarded to the Board. A follow-up meeting with the Global Fund Executive Director would be held in the following two weeks. The CEO had been invited to present to the Global Fund Board on the RBM Partnership's malaria financing work to further amplify the challenge.

RBM/B27/2023/DP08 – Climate change and malaria

The CEO confirmed that the RBM Partnership would be leading a campaign on the climate change and malaria in preparation for the COP28 in the UAE and reported that a meeting was being planned with the COP28 delegation on the sidelines of UNGA to amplify RBM's position. At the request of **the Board**, **the CEO** confirmed that the draft Climate Change and Malaria narrative would be shared with Board Members to facilitate amplification of collective voices. **Ms Kapinga** requested to join the Climate Change and Malaria Working Group.

The Board Members took note of the updates related to the 27th Board meeting decision points.

IV UPDATES

a RBM Secretariat updates from the CEO and Q&A with the Board

[*See Annex 4*](#)

By means of slides, **the CEO** presented the Secretariat updates.

To strengthen transparency and accountability, the CEO confirmed that the Secretariat would introduce quarterly coordination meetings with donors on financial matters, with the outcomes to be considered at the Finance Committee meetings.

As regards the Global Malaria Dashboard, the CEO highlighted continuous efforts to ensure enhanced accountability and transparency. He added that the status of the country technical assistance work is continuously updated into the country support dashboard and work to reflect the contribution of partners is ongoing.

The CEO underscored the urgent need for the Board's support with resource mobilisation efforts, as well as for the active engagement to deliver on the RBM vision.

The CEO confirmed the plan to staff the Secretariat at 80% by the end of 2023 to be able to serve as a centre of excellence to coordinate the Partnership and ensure more impact/support at country level.

The CEO thanked:

- the Board, and the Board Leadership especially, for the remarkable support since assuming function 3 months previously.
- the Partner Committee and Working Group Co-chairs for the significant achievements made, noting the remarkable increase in technical assistance to countries in comparison with the previous year.
- the Donors for their continuous support to the RBM Partnership's work.
- Mr Kirkwood/UNOPS for improvements in collaboration and support to find prompt solutions to challenges.
- the Secretariat personnel for their hard work and unwavering dedication despite continuous understaffing challenges.

The Board Members shared the following comments/guidance:

- Thanked the CEO for the great achievements since assuming his duties just three months previously.
- Reaffirmed readiness to amplify the link between malaria/health and climate change, and to join the RBM Malaria and Climate Change Working Group.
- Offered support to facilitate the attendance of Heads of State in the forthcoming ALMA/RBM high-level conference to be held in New York on 22 September to which all Board Members that will be present in New York were invited. A concept note will be shared for advance preparations.
- Recommended that the CEO visit ECCAS and ECOWAS in 2023 in addition to the other Regional Economic Communities (RECs) that the CEO had visited on the sidelines of other official duty travels.

The Board Members took note of the updates provided.

b Resource mobilisation plan update & Q&A

[See Annex 5](#)

By means of slides, **the CEO** presented an update on the development of a five-year resource mobilisation strategy, supported by a consultant, and confirmed that a comprehensive advocacy and communications package will be shared with the Board by December to support the ongoing resource mobilisation efforts.

The Board Members:

- Requested more information on the planned TA resource mobilisation approaches.
- Considered whether malaria endemic countries could contribute resources to the RBM work and noted the need to create tailored messaging to support resource mobilisation efforts.

The CEO recalled that ending malaria needed a multi-sectoral approach and that consultations would be carried with the Board and with country managers on inputs how RBM can enhance its work at country level.

The Board Members took note of the updates provided.

c 2024 workplan and budget considerations & QA

[See Annex 6](#)

By means of slides, **the CEO** presented the 2024 workplan and budget considerations prior to the Board's approval of the final draft at its next meeting. The CEO explained that the planning was being done via a "bottom up" approach to ensure a workplan for the entire Partnership,

including the Working Groups ambitions. He underscored the focus of the budget on activities, equating to 65%, to provide country level support.

The Finance Committee Chair thanked the CEO for the comprehensive presentation and added the following comments:

- Highlighted that the resource mobilisation plan would bring in more funding to support the 2024 workplan.
- Reported that out of the necessary reserves of USD 2.4 million, only 763,000 was available.
- Thanked RBM donors for supporting the Board's transition into a new governance model and the 2023 workplan.

The Board Members took note of the information provided.

V GOVERNANCE

a RBM hosting arrangements of 1 September 2023

The Board Chair thanked the CEO for hitting the ground running and the Finance Committee Chair for successfully assuming his duties. As agreed during the Board retreat of 15 May and last Board meeting of 16 May, the Board Chair invited Mr Kirkwood to explain the RBM hosting arrangements with UNOPS.

[*See Annex 7*](#)

By means of slides, **Mr Kirkwood** explained that UN and non-UN entities act as host entities for multi-party initiatives, providing a neutral legal framework for hostees. RBM Partnership is therefore not established under any laws and does not have its own legal identity. RBM Secretariat is part of UNOPS and its personnel are UNOPS employees.

In line with the UNOPS Operational Instruction on Hosting and the RBM Bye-Laws, the Board is responsible for setting the strategy, workplan and approving budget; the CEO manages the Secretariat and implements the Board-approved strategy, workplan and budget. The CEO is appointed by UNOPS Executive Director in agreement with the Board; his/her performance reviews are conducted jointly by UNOPS and the Board, with the Board, including WHO, overseeing functional and programmatic CEO objectives, and UNOPS the administrative ones.

UNOPS provides services to the RBM Secretariat and delegates some authority to the Secretariat through the CEO and other Secretariat personnel.

The Board Members shared the following comments:

- Expressed confusion regarding the hosting arrangements in terms of UNOPS appearing to micromanage the Secretariat.
- Expressed concerns regarding various governance issues in the joint hosting agreement including absence of the definition of terms, clear description of roles between RBM and UNOPS, lack of transparency in terms of measuring UNOPS performance, the fees charged to RBM, et al.
- Stressed that the Board holds responsibility for HR matters.

- Noted lack of independence regarding RBM audits, which are internal to UNOPS.

The Board Chair noted the concerns shared and recalled that such agreements are standard within the UN system for hosted entities and difficulties to negotiate changes.

Mr Kirkwood confirmed that the same joint hosting agreement template is used for all of the eight partnerships hosted at UNOPS. He expressed the confidence in the ability to address any potential challenges via ongoing dialogue.

Mr Kirkwood reiterated that the RBM Board is a governing body rather than advisory. He stressed that the Board's role is to guide the Secretariat, approve the strategy, budget and workplan, and hold the CEO accountability for the implementation of the approved decisions. UNOPS does not micromanage the Secretariat, rather oversee that the functioning of the Secretariat is compliant with applicable UNOPS rules and regulations and assumes any wrongdoing.

The UNOPS representative on the RBM Board's role is to advise if any proposed decision may be in violation of UN/UNOPS provisions. The UN can only be audited by the UN Board of auditors. UNOPS appoint a private audit firm to carry out audits.

He explained that UNOPS does not have a fixed rate fee for hosted engagements, with each being assessed individually in terms of the UNOPS costs to implement the project.

Mr Kirkwood offered to hold bilateral conversation to discuss details of the hosting arrangements with the average of 5% and RBM hosting fee being 7%. Additional direct costs for services provided by UNOPS amount to 1% of the RBM expenditure, with 2% extra charged for on-demand services provided by the UNOPS Geneva office.

The Board Chair thanked the Board Members for the valuable observations and confirmed that hosting arrangement topics will continue to be discussed on a as needed basis by the new Board to ensure a fit-for-purpose arrangement for the RBM Partnership.

The Board Members took note of the information provided.

- b Revision of the Conflict-of-Interest (CoI) policy of 1 September 2023 RBM/B28/2023/**DP02**

[*See Annex 8*](#)

By means of slides, **the CEO** recalled that under the new composition of the Board and good practice, it was necessary to review the Conflict-of-Interest policy. He stressed that when there is a conflict, it does not automatically mean an exclusion given the related proper management.

The RBM Partnership to End Malaria Board approved the Conflict-of-Interest Policy and its associated Declaration of Interest Form as attached to document reference RBM/B28/2023/DP02 which will replace the prior Conflict-of-Interest Policy and Declaration of Interest Form.

c Revision of the Partner Committee Standard Operating Procedures of 29 August 2023

RBM/B28/2023/**DP03**

[See Annex 9](#)

By means of slides, **the CEO** reported that nine governance documents had been simplified and compressed into one document to facilitate the functioning of Partner Committees. He added that the Working Groups Standard Operating Procedures would be presented at the next Board meeting for approval.

In reply to **Dr Oyier**, **the CEO** explained that Partner Committees will decide on their respective membership and size, with at least one of the Partner Committee Co-chairs being from a malaria endemic country.

The RBM Partnership to End Malaria Board approved the Partner Committee Standard Operating Procedures, replacing previously adopted documentation governing the operations of the Partner Committees and tasked the Secretariat with their immediate implementation.

d Revision of Finance Committee Terms of Reference of 1 September 2023

RBM/B28/2023/**DP04**

[See Annex 10](#)

By means of slides, **the Finance Committee Chair** presented the proposed revisions to the Finance Committee Terms of Reference. He highlighted that an additional proposal included the possible formation of a Strategy Committee in view of the significant expectations from the Finance Committee in terms of resource mobilisation, finance and human resource matters and invited Board Members to share feedback on the proposed draft Strategy Committee Terms of Reference that had been included in the pre-read, which could be approved via an electronic decision point before the next meeting.

The Board Chair proposed that the decision regarding the possible creation of a Strategy Committee be taken at the next meeting.

The Board Members asked for clarifications in due course:

- the roles of the Board vis-à-vis the proposed Strategy Committee;
- how to interact with some Partner Committees such as ARMPC to avoid overlaps.

The CEO stressed that forming a Strategy Committee before the next Board meeting would be most helpful to support the Secretariat in the ongoing work on strategy review and implementation plan.

The RBM Partnership to End Malaria Board approved the updated Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee as attached to document reference RBM/B28/2023/DP04 that will replace previously adopted documentation governing the operations of the Finance Committee.

[Ms Ba left the meeting]

[See Annex 11](#)

By means of slides, **the CEO** presented the background information on the SCPC Co-chair selection and the SCPC and the Secretariat's recommendation on the top candidate following a transparent and competitive process.

He explained that only one SCPC Co-chair vacancy was being filled to allow for staggering to ensure continuity and preservation of institutional knowledge, as well as in view of the possible ARMPC/SCPC merger to be considered at the next Board meeting – a comprehensive analysis on whether to merge or not will be presented to the Board at the next meeting.

In response to **Mr Matta, the Board Chair** confirmed that the top nominee's organisation had approved the proposed SCPC Co-chair appointment.

The RBM Partnership to End Malaria Board approved the nomination of Ms Maelle Ba to the post of SCPC Co-chair for a 3-year term effective 12 September 2023.

VI KEY PRIORITIES AND RELATED ACTIONS

[Ms Ba rejoined the meeting]

The CEO summarised the key priorities and related actions arising from the meeting as follows:

- Urgency to join forces to raise funds for the RBM Partnership to End Malaria.
- Fully staffing the Secretariat, with 80% of personnel capacity foreseen to be filled by December 2023; with advance thanks to Donors, Partners and UNOPS to prioritise these efforts.
- Prioritise work on strategy and implementation plan.
- Amplification of malaria linkage with climate change and beyond.
- Securing a meeting with the COP28 delegation on the sidelines of UNGA.
- Decide on the best occasion to mark the 25th anniversary of the RBM Partnership in November 2023.
- Focus on collective work to maximise impact on the ground.
- Provide support to constituencies to ensure collective accountability.
- Secretariat to continue working closely together with Partner Committees and Working Groups to ensure a bottom-up planning process.
- Challenging the RBM Partnership to approve an ambitious budget of USD 18 million.

The CEO reiterated heartfelt thanks to the hard-working Secretariat Team to support the RBM Partnership work, as well as the Board Chair, the Board Leadership, the entire Board and UNOPS for their valuable support.

The Board Chair thanked the Board and the Secretariat for the fruitful discussions and tireless efforts to ensure success in the RBM Partnership’s mission.

The RBM Partnership to End Malaria Board took note of the information provided.

VII AOB

a 29th Board meeting

The Board Chair reiterated the Board’s gratitude to Mr Al Mubarak for hosting the 29th Board meeting in the UAE in December.

Mr Al Mubarak announced that all Board Members will be invited to attend the Reaching the Last Mile Forum on 3 December and enquired into a possibility to reduce the 29th Board meeting to one day to be held on 5 December. **The Board Chair** thanked Mr Al Mubarak for the generosity to host the RBM Board and for the commitment to health.

The Board Members expressed concerns that one day would be insufficient to address all of the foreseen topics at the last meeting of the year, and requested the CEO to explore possibilities and revert with proposed options.

b 2024 Board meetings

The Board Chair tasked the Secretariat to propose dates for 2024 Board meeting in a Doodle, including exploring whether it may be possible to hold a meeting before the World Health Assembly to possibly invite Ministers to the last session of the meeting.

c Working Groups

Given the important work of the RBM Partnership Working Group, **the Board Chair** encouraged all Board Members to join a Working Group based on their interest and parameters of constituencies.

To strengthen the important partnership with Working Groups, the Board Chair suggested that one Working Group presents its work at each of the following Board meetings.

VIII CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Board Chair reiterated the importance of continued dedication to the mission of the RBM Partnership to End Malaria, whilst recalling that health issues are global and without eliminating malaria, it will not be possible to effectively respond to other global health challenges and reach the SDGs and the last mile.

The Board Chair thanked the Board for their active engagement and reiterated the invitations to join Working Groups and Board Committees to be created.

The Board Chair sincerely thanked the hard-working Secretariat for preparing the meeting and for supporting the CEO in his new role in the fast-moving environment, and closed the meeting.

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