




MONICA GEINGOS
FIRST LADY OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

UNAIDS SPECIAL ADVOCATE FOR YOUNG
WOMEN AND ADOLESCENT GIRLS





“The progress made since the launch in 2011 of the Global Plan towards the elimination of new HIV infections among children by 2015 and keeping their mothers alive has shown that the world can end the AIDS epidemic among children, adolescents and young women by 2020.”

MONICA GEINGOS, FIRST LADY OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



Q&A WITH MONICA GEINGOS

Monica Geingos is a qualified lawyer and a highly experienced businesswoman. Before becoming the First Lady of the Republic of Namibia in 2015, Ms Geingos spent 15 years in the financial sector, as a private equity and governance expert. As First Lady she will seek to complement the President's declaration of a "war on poverty" and will work with UNAIDS to champion the newly launched Start Free, Stay Free, AIDS Free agenda.

What motivated you to become involved in the response to HIV?

We all have a friend or relative who has been diagnosed with HIV. We have all seen the full spectrum of emotions that accompany HIV, from detection through to treatment. Most of all, all of us have experienced first-hand the devastating link between poverty, lack of education and vulnerability to HIV.

What motivated me is the idea that by ensuring a brighter future for women, especially young women and adolescent girls, they will escape from hopelessness and the idea that contracting HIV doesn't make a difference.

DID YOU KNOW?

Monica Geingos has been inducted into the Namibian Business Hall of Fame and has received awards for Namibian Business Personality of the Year and Most Innovative Entrepreneur of the Year.

Namibia has made great progress in reducing new HIV infections among children in recent years. What changes have you noticed in the country as a result?

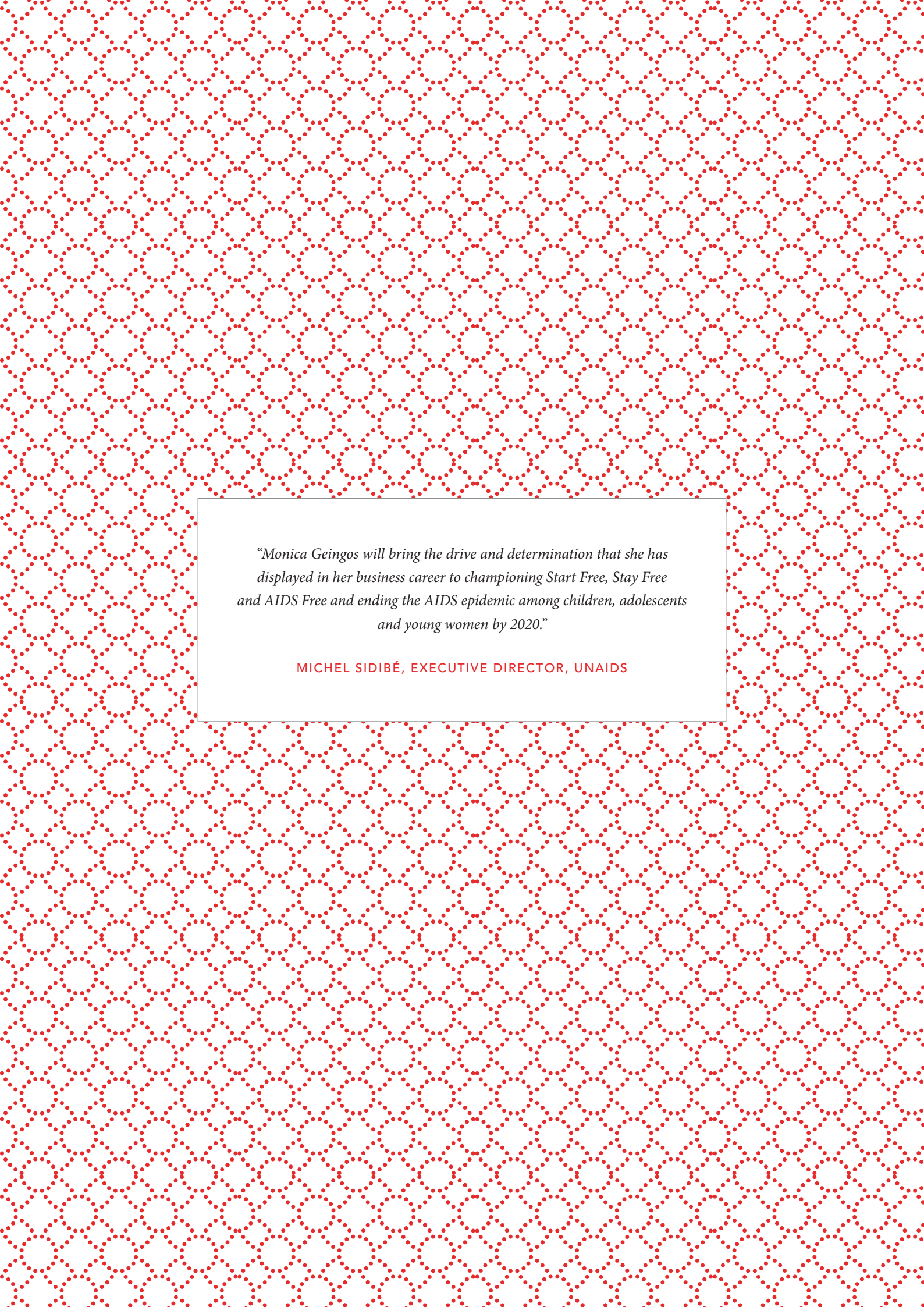
Namibia has achieved tremendous results. Since 2001, new HIV infections have been reduced by 56% and mother-to-child transmission has reduced from 20% in 2001 to 4% in 2014. The success has resulted in a conviction that we can reduce mother-to-child transmission to zero by 2020. Intensive efforts are being made to ensure that new infections among young people are contained and that pregnant mothers are tested and have access to treatment, that children navigate the path to adolescence and adulthood HIV-free and that they remain HIV-free as adults. Our success has dared us to dream of an AIDS-free generation in our lifetime.

What do you think are the challenges to the response to HIV in Namibia?

Namibia's exceptionally large size and low population translates into a country with the second lowest population density in the world, and two thirds of the population live in rural areas. These factors provide huge challenges in relation to the accessibility and continuous supply of health services and medicines.

In addition, Namibia is classified as an upper-middle-income country, but has one of the most unequal income distributions in the world. This classification of Namibia has resulted in the withdrawal of developmental partners.

These and other issues represent real challenges, but are not insurmountable. The exceptional progress that Namibia has made in reducing new HIV infections and deaths contextualizes how phenomenal the Namibian response has been.



“Monica Geingos will bring the drive and determination that she has displayed in her business career to championing Start Free, Stay Free and AIDS Free and ending the AIDS epidemic among children, adolescents and young women by 2020.”

MICHEL SIDIBÉ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNAIDS

START FREE, STAY FREE, AIDS FREE

Start Free, Stay Free, AIDS Free aims to galvanize global momentum around a shared and ambitious agenda to build on the progress achieved under the *Global Plan towards the elimination of new HIV infections among children by 2015 and keeping their mothers alive* (Global Plan). The Global Plan resulted in remarkable progress, reducing new HIV infections among children by 60% in 21 of the most affected countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Yet the job is far from done. In 2015, 150 000 [110 000–190 000] children became newly infected with HIV globally, 110 000 [78 000–150 000] of whom lived in the 21 Global Plan priority countries.

Start Free, Stay Free, AIDS Free provides a road map for the urgent work ahead, elevating and amplifying key initiatives that are already accelerating the global response to HIV.

The Start Free, Stay Free, AIDS Free targets are ambitious, but reaching them is essential to ending the AIDS epidemic among children, adolescents and young women by 2020. Critical gaps remain in responding to HIV and progress has lagged behind for adolescents and young women. The global community must Super-Fast-Track its efforts to meet these urgent needs and change the trajectory of the AIDS epidemic once and for all.

A SUPER-FAST-TRACK FRAMEWORK FOR ENDING AIDS AMONG
CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG WOMEN BY 2020

START FREE

Eliminate new HIV infections among children (aged 0–14) by reducing the number of children newly infected annually to less than 40 000 by 2018 and 20 000 by 2020.

Reach and sustain 95% of pregnant women living with HIV with lifelong HIV treatment by 2018.

STAY FREE

Reduce the number of new HIV infections among adolescents and young women (aged 10–24) to less than 100 000 by 2020.

Provide voluntary medical circumcision for HIV prevention to 25 million additional men by 2020, with a focus on young men (aged 15–29).

AIDS FREE

Provide 1.6 million children (aged 0–14) and 1.2 million adolescents (aged 15–19) living with HIV with antiretroviral therapy by 2018.

Provide 1.4 million children (aged 0–14) and 1 million adolescents (aged 15–19) with HIV treatment by 2020.

150 000 [110 000–190 000]

THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO BECAME NEWLY INFECTED WITH HIV GLOBALLY IN 2015.

110 000 [78 000–150 000]

THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO DIED OF AN AIDS-RELATED ILLNESS IN 2015.

60%

THE PERCENTAGE OF NEW HIV INFECTIONS REDUCED BETWEEN 2009 AND 2015 AMONG CHILDREN IN THE 21 COUNTRIES IN AFRICA WHERE 90% OF HIV-POSITIVE PREGNANT WOMEN LIVE.

4

THE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES THAT HAVE ELIMINATED MOTHER-TO-CHILD TRANSMISSION OF HIV.

