



Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNAIDS

UNICEF • WFP • UNDP • UNFPA • UNODC
ILO • UNESCO • WHO • WORLD BANK

A joint response to **HIV/AIDS**



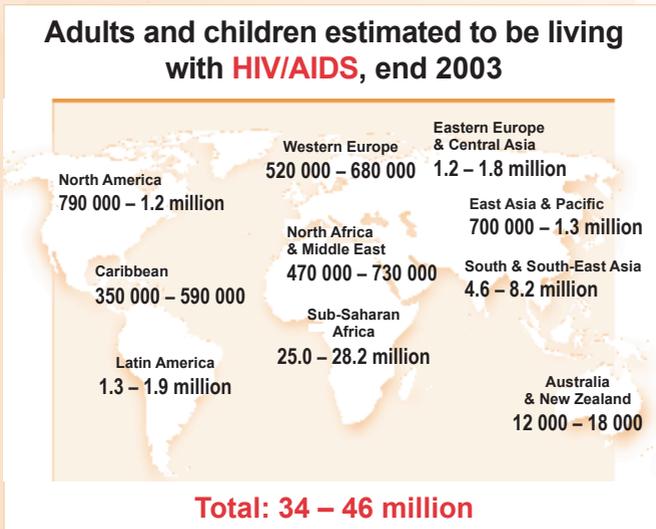
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Joint United Nations Programme on **HIV/AIDS**

HIV/AIDS: a unique global threat

Since AIDS was first described in 1981, well over 20 million lives have been lost, and tens of millions more people—increasingly women and young people—are now living with HIV. Most face the prospect of sickness, destitution and premature death. In the developing world, where 95% of people with HIV live, only 7% of those who needed life-saving treatment could obtain it in 2003—a stark contrast to the developed world, where such treatment has become standard health practice.

In the hardest-hit countries, AIDS is dramatically reducing life expectancy and economic potential, increasing the vulnerability of future generations by creating millions of orphans, and diminishing the capacity of public and private sectors. In some parts of Africa, AIDS has significantly exacerbated the already severe problems of food security.



HIV infection rates continue to climb in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and the virus is also spreading in some of the world's most populous countries,

How **UNAIDS** supports a more effective global response to AIDS

- **Leadership and advocacy** for effective action on the epidemic.
- **Strategic information** to guide efforts against AIDS worldwide.
- **Tracking, monitoring and evaluation** of the epidemic and of responses to it.
- **Civil society engagement and partnership development.**
- **Mobilization of resources** to support an effective response.

including China, India, Indonesia and Russia. Worldwide, experts believe that the rate of new HIV infections could escalate 25% or more by 2005. At the same time, the success of prevention programmes has been documented on every continent, and projects in diverse regions have demonstrated the feasibility of providing effective care and treatment to people living with HIV in developing countries.

Although the challenges posed by HIV are daunting, powerful tools are at our disposal to **prevent new infections, deliver effective treatments, and ease the harsh impacts of the epidemic.** Yet the epidemic—together with its associated mortality rates and societal effects—is expanding much faster than the rate at which programmes are being implemented. To meet these challenges, the worldwide response must outpace the epidemic itself.

UNAIDS: a unique response

To address this multifaceted, worldwide problem, six United Nations (UN) agencies combined forces in 1996 to establish **the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.** They included the United Nations Children's fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank. Three additional Cosponsoring Organizations have since joined

UNAIDS: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in 1999, International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2001, and World Food Programme (WFP) in 2003. UNAIDS is an innovative United Nations venture that builds on each member's energies and strengths and prompts them to take collective action against AIDS.

Today, UNAIDS is served by a Secretariat, headquartered in Geneva, with offices in more than 70 countries and Cosponsor representation in



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dozens of additional countries.*

UNAIDS is guided by a Programme Coordinating Board (PCB), which serves as its governing body and holds a regular session at least once a year. The PCB comprises 22 government representatives from all regions of the world. The nine UNAIDS Cosponsors and five nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including associations of

people living with HIV, are non-voting members.

By reducing overlap, focusing on results, and enhancing the effectiveness and transparency of its members, UNAIDS is a prime example of UN reform in action. All global and regional AIDS activities of the UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors, for example, are strategically coordinated every two years in a **Unified Budget and Workplan**—a key instrument for accountability and fundraising. At country level, UN Theme Groups on HIV/AIDS coordinate AIDS-related work by diverse UN agencies to maximize their collective impact.

In 2002, the PCB addressed the results of a comprehensive external evaluation of the first five years of UNAIDS' existence, which applauded the Joint Programme for its global leadership in increasing commitment

*References to UNAIDS are to the Joint Programme as a whole, including the Secretariat and all nine Cosponsors.

and resources for AIDS and for its policy guidance. UNAIDS is now seeking to build on these successes and refocus its work on the central challenge of helping countries bring to scale **evidence-based action on AIDS**.

SUPPORTING COUNTRIES

The bulk of UNAIDS' work occurs in countries struggling to respond to the epidemic. The Joint Programme helps coordinate all AIDS-related activities undertaken by the UN system. UNAIDS Country Coordinators provide strategic support to UN Theme Groups, governments and other partners in countries.

The Programme assists governments in the development and implementation of detailed action plans to fight AIDS with a wide variety of actors. More than 100 countries had completed such strategic AIDS plans by December 2003. To help ensure coordination and leadership, UNAIDS supports government-led national AIDS councils, which have been established in more than 85 countries and are led by heads of state, heads of government or their deputies in 31 countries. It also promotes effective implementation of national strategic plans by assisting countries in drafting donor proposals, integrating AIDS strategies into broader development initiatives such as Poverty Reduction Strategies, and undertaking programme reviews that gauge the effectiveness of AIDS-related efforts.

UNAIDS supports countries in the development, implementation and scale-up of comprehensive AIDS strategies

UNAIDS Cosponsors provide substantial direct financial support for national AIDS programmes, including more than US\$1 billion from the World Bank and US\$150 million in assistance from other UN agencies in 2002 alone.

As the epidemic evolves, UNAIDS is increasingly focusing on regions where the epidemic is emerging as a serious problem, such as in Asia and Eastern Europe, while continuing to support efforts to respond to AIDS in the hardest-hit regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean.

UNAIDS brokers technical support and facilitates country-to-country sharing of experience, helping countries assess and strengthen their HIV-related efforts, and promoting the full engagement of civil society in the national response to AIDS.

Nearly two-thirds of all infections projected for the current decade could be averted by scaling up existing prevention strategies. The Joint Programme provides technical advice and support to countries and the expansion of science-based prevention programmes. UNICEF, for example, helps countries create and expand programmes to prevent mother-to-child transmission, while



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UNODC assists countries in implementing comprehensive programmes to prevent HIV transmission among injecting drug users.

UNAIDS also supports countries in expanding access to the effective HIV **treatments** and supportive services that have dramatically lowered rates of HIV-related death and illness in industrialized countries. The Joint Programme sponsored early operational research demonstrating

the feasibility of prescribing antiretroviral drugs in poor countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda. As a result of negotiations brokered by UNAIDS, antiretroviral prices have declined by more than 90% since 2001. WHO offers professional guidance and support to countries to initiate and expand comprehensive care and treatment programmes for people living with HIV. For example, in Malawi, UNAIDS is supporting national efforts to expand voluntary counselling and testing, antiretroviral treatment programmes, and services to prevent mother-to-child transmission. Most recently, WHO has spearheaded the “3 by 5” initiative to bring antiretroviral therapy to three million people by 2005.

Increasingly, the UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors are weaving such initiatives into overall national development activities such as **Poverty Reduction Strategies**—in line with the need to address the multifaceted effects of the epidemic.

The crippling impact of AIDS has been brought into especially sharp focus in southern Africa, where countries confront the triple threat of food insecurity,

the heavy impact of AIDS, and diminished institutional capacity as a result of the epidemic. The Joint Programme is actively collaborating with the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development to intensify the response to the crisis in Southern Africa.



LEADERSHIP

The Joint Programme works to keep AIDS at the top of global and national agendas, promoting effective leadership and intensifying commitment at all levels.

UNAIDS served as Secretariat for the first-ever Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on HIV/AIDS in 2001, which resulted in unanimous endorsement of the **Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS** by all 189 Member States. The Declaration established time-bound performance targets in the fight against AIDS, with specific benchmarks for accountability.

The UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors continually engage leaders from all walks of life in the struggle against the epidemic

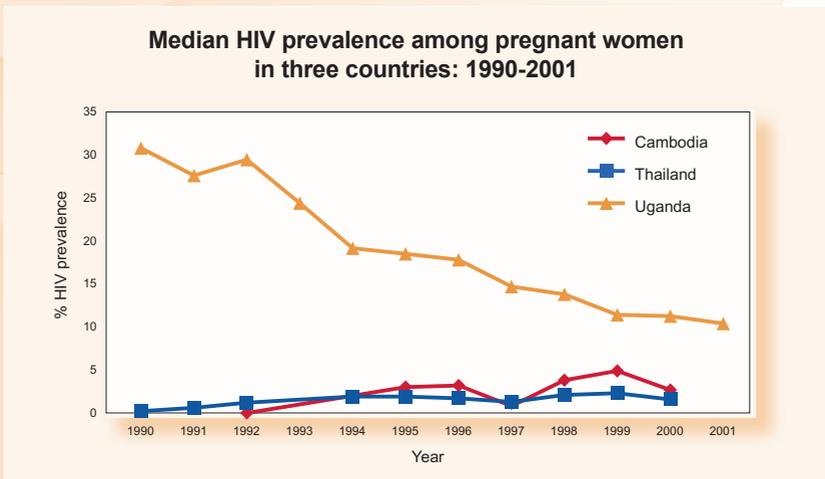
UNAIDS facilitated the first-ever global discussion by UN Member States on the progress made in reaching the targets during the UN General Assembly session in 2003. Despite considerable progress, many Member States will not meet the basic AIDS prevention and care goals unless efforts are dramatically scaled up.

Joining United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who has made AIDS one of his top personal priorities, the UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors continually engage political, religious, cultural and social leaders throughout the world in the struggle against AIDS.

In the context of Africa, UNAIDS assists the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the **Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa** (CHGA) with the aim of promoting good governance into the response

to AIDS. In the Pacific, the **Asia-Pacific Leadership Forum** (APLF) is aimed at influencing political and non-political decision-makers to exercise leadership on HIV/AIDS. In the Caribbean, UNAIDS works within the **Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS** (PANCAP) as it assists the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in its efforts to increase access to antiretroviral treatment. In Eastern Europe, UNAIDS supported the development of the **Programme of Urgent Response of the CIS Member States to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic**, which emphasizes a multisectoral response and broad partnerships.

The Joint Programme devotes considerable energy to strengthening HIV/AIDS-related leadership in a variety of areas. For example, UNFPA advocacy has raised awareness of the epidemic's impact on **young people** and on the importance of



integrating **gender** perspectives and access to reproductive health into national strategies and programmes. UNICEF continually works towards increasing commitment to an effective response that will mitigate the epidemic's impact on **children** and families, including the more than 14 million **orphans** who had lost one or both parents to AIDS by the end of 2002. UNDP leadership programmes help countries overcome institutional difficulties, strengthen service delivery, and forge AIDS partnerships between governmental and nongovernmental actors. As the world's largest humanitarian agency, WFP focuses on fighting HIV and AIDS through its **food aid** programmes, since good nutrition is essential both for people living with HIV and for poor, HIV-affected households.



UNAIDS has organized strong HIV prevention programmes in all UN peacekeeping operations, including the dissemination of HIV/AIDS awareness cards in 11 languages for peacekeepers and other uniformed services personnel.

UNAIDS regularly generates front-page media coverage through public appearances, news releases, and such publications as the annual *AIDS Epidemic Update*. The **World AIDS Campaign**, which, in recent years, has focused on such topics as AIDS-related stigma and the importance of men in reducing the spread of infection, educates millions about the need to avoid HIV transmission and the importance of a more vigorous global response. A recent MTV campaign, supported by UNAIDS in 2003, reached 938 million households (74 % of TV penetration worldwide) and was broadcast in 88% of the top 50 countries most affected by HIV/AIDS.

UNAIDS has launched a **Global Coalition on Women and AIDS**, bringing together leading women and men committed to improving the lives of women and girls worldwide. Its efforts will focus on preventing new HIV infections among women and girls, promoting equal access to HIV care and treatment, accelerating microbicides research, protecting women's property and inheritance rights and reducing violence against women.

THE GLOBAL REFERENCE FOR AIDS POLICY

In December 2003, WHO and UNAIDS released a detailed and concrete plan to provide antiretroviral treatment to three million people living with AIDS in developing countries by the end of 2005. This is a vital step towards the ultimate goal of providing universal access to AIDS treatment to all those who require it.

The Joint Programme works to ensure that national responses to AIDS and funding decisions by donors are based on timely, accurate information and on the best available **scientific evidence**.

Where difficult issues or changing circumstances create uncertainty, UNAIDS convenes leading experts to help interpret research findings and guide policy development. WHO has accelerated efforts to expand **treatment access** by issuing guidelines on antiretroviral therapy in resource-limited settings. ILO's **Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work**, developed in consultation with employers, workers' organizations and governments, identifies good workplace practices relating to AIDS. UNESCO has led the Joint Programme's efforts to develop policy guidance on HIV/AIDS and **education**, and the Joint Programme has collaborated with others to address policy issues pertaining to the epidemic's impact on the **agricultural sector and food security**.

UNAIDS maintains and widely disseminates up-to-date information on HIV/AIDS—from its Best Practice Collection to technical reports and national profiles

UNAIDS maintains and widely disseminates up-to-date information on HIV/AIDS—from its **Best Practice Collection** to technical reports and **national profiles**. Information generated by the Joint Programme, available in multiple languages on the web, is used by diverse audiences—government ministries and parliamentarians, donor agencies, programme planners, researchers and scientific experts, journalists, activists and interested lay people. In a recent 32-country survey by the International AIDS Economic Network, UNAIDS was named the best source of information on the AIDS epidemic.

As the leader of global efforts to anticipate and address likely changes in the epidemic, the Joint Programme projects the level of **future resource needs** for AIDS programmes and assesses the likely impact of a scale-up of available strategies.

UNAIDS and UN organizations such as UNECA and private sector companies such as Shell are also undertaking an ambitious project to delineate likely future scenarios on the impact of AIDS in Africa, with the aim of developing timely strategies to mitigate the effects of the epidemic.

To accelerate the search for a preventive **vaccine**, a joint WHO/UNAIDS vaccine unit has issued guidelines for the ethical conduct of vaccine trials. UNAIDS also provides extensive policy guidance on all human rights aspects of the AIDS epidemic.



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MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Joint Programme is the world's leading resource for **epidemiological data** on HIV/AIDS. Its biennial ***Report on the Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic***, for example, issued in advance of the International AIDS Conference, provides detailed information on HIV infection trends in key populations and in specific regions and countries. UNAIDS is also the world's leading provider of information on the sources, nature and level of AIDS-related **spending**.

UNAIDS is spearheading efforts to monitor and report on the world's **progress** in implementing the goals set forth in the UN General Assembly's **Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS**. National and global measures developed by UNAIDS to assess progress towards the achievement of the Declaration's goals have been broadly embraced, with nearly 100 countries in 2003 providing comprehensive information on the status of national responses. The **Country Response Information System** (CRIS), for example, is the first global mechanism to track national responses according to standard indicators. The **Global AIDS Monitoring and Evaluation Support Team** (GAME/T), housed at the World Bank, assists in harmonizing diverse monitoring and evaluation efforts and in building monitoring and evaluation capacity in developing countries.

A JOINT EFFORT

If there were one word to describe the Joint Programme's approach to its work, it would be partnership. Because no one agency or approach can single-handedly address the global epidemic, UNAIDS works with a broad array of actors—governments throughout the world, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), researchers and technical experts, and leaders from business, religion and the arts.



UNAIDS/G. Pirozzi, R. Bowman

UNAIDS regularly engages with the media, youth groups, women's associations, human rights bodies, business organizations, labour unions and faith-based organizations. It actively collaborates with NGO networks, such as the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations, and especially those made up of people living with HIV/AIDS. UNAIDS has also been working with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation since 2002.

UNAIDS also helps engage business in the response to AIDS

through extensive work with the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, National Business Councils for AIDS, and the World Economic Forum. It has brokered agreements with the business community to raise awareness of AIDS and offer HIV treatment in the workplace. It has also been instrumental in negotiating groundbreaking agreements with the pharmaceutical industry to bring down the price of antiretroviral drugs.



Although experience around the world has shown that responses to the epidemic are strengthened by the **active engagement of people living with HIV**, these individuals remain the most under-utilized resource in the epidemic, and the Joint Programme is promoting their involvement at all levels of the response to AIDS.

UNAIDS leads efforts to put an end to AIDS-related **discrimination and stigma** through innovative initiatives around the world.

MOBILIZING RESOURCES

Since UNAIDS was created, annual institutional spending on HIV/AIDS programmes in low- and middle-income countries has increased more than ten-fold—from less than US\$300 million in 1996 to more than US\$3 billion in 2002. Yet substantial additional resources are needed to mount an effective global response: at least US\$10.5 billion annually by 2005 and US\$15 billion by 2007 from all sources—domestic and international. UNAIDS is the prime resource for the analysis of AIDS resource needs and utilization—key elements in financial resource decision-making.

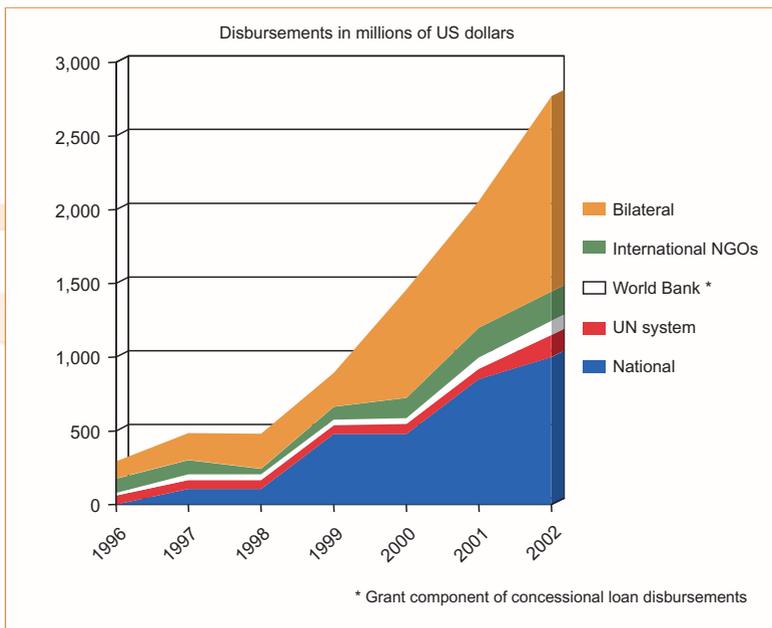


A UNAIDS Cosponsor, the World Bank is one of the largest single providers of financial assistance for AIDS programmes in developing countries. Through its Multicountry AIDS Programme (MAP), the Bank has allocated more than US\$1 billion in assistance in sub-Saharan Africa and more than US\$150 million for countries in the Caribbean, with support for the poorest countries coming in the form of 100% grants.

UNAIDS is coordinating efforts to generate additional resources for HIV/AIDS programmes in developing countries

Efforts by the Secretariat and Cosponsors were critical to the timely establishment in December 2002 of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria as a new financial mechanism to leverage additional resources for AIDS. As of June 2003, US\$4.6 billion in pledges had been made to the Global Fund. In addition to helping countries develop and implement proposals to the Global Fund, the Joint Programme provides extensive technical support and advice to the Fund's Secretariat. UNAIDS also assists countries as they seek to mobilize their human resources, reorganize institutional systems, develop policies that integrate HIV/AIDS into Poverty Reduction Strategies, and assemble the capacities and technical know-how they need to confront the epidemic effectively.

Institutional HIV/AIDS spending, 1996-2002



The Joint Programme's unified budget is funded through voluntary contributions. The UN system itself has substantially increased its own regular budget investments in HIV/AIDS programmes.



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UNAIDS

UNICEF-WFP-UNDP-UNFPA-UNODC
ILO-UNESCO-WHO-WORLD BANK

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, **UNAIDS**, is the main advocate for global action on the epidemic. It leads, strengthens and supports an expanded response aimed at preventing transmission of HIV, providing care and support, reducing the vulnerability of individuals and communities to HIV/AIDS, and alleviating the impact of the epidemic.



UNAIDS/G. Pirozzi

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The front cover shows the United Nations building illuminated with the red ribbon on the occasion of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, New York, June 2001.