

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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MESSAGE ON WORLD AIDS DAY**1 December 2013**

On this World AIDS Day, I am more optimistic than ever. Much of the world is accelerating progress in responding to HIV. There are significant decreases in new infections and deaths, and we are making good progress in realizing our target of ensuring 15 million people have access to antiretroviral treatment by 2015. This is crucial to halting and reversing the AIDS epidemic for good.

But, as revealed in the UNAIDS World AIDS Day Report for 2013, there are still worrying signals that some regions and countries are falling behind. We are making advances in reaching vulnerable populations through efforts to eliminate stigma and discrimination, but there is still much to do to end this problem. We must recommit to breaking the remaining barriers, including punitive laws and social exclusion, so we can reach all people who lack access to HIV treatment and services.

To create conditions for an AIDS-free generation, we must also step up efforts to stop new HIV infections among children and ensure access to treatment for all mothers living with HIV. I especially urge action to end the discrimination and violence against women which cause terrible harm and increase risk of HIV infection and death from AIDS.

I commend all partners that are making significant contributions to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which is one of the most important sources of funding for the global response. Major economies are leading by example, ensuring sustained resources for the response to AIDS and other diseases. Many low- and middle-income countries have also significantly increased domestic expenditure on AIDS responses. All deserve our full support as they explore financing options to promote long-term sustainability of the response to AIDS beyond 2015.

There is still much to do. If we want a future free of AIDS we will need continued investment, commitment and innovation to reach the vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. On this World AIDS Day, let us resolve to consign AIDS to the pages of history.