

Press

NEW UK FUNDING FOR GLOBAL AIDS BATTLE AS EUROPE BACKS GREATER SUPPORT FOR HIV PREVENTION

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Over £27.5 million for global AIDS prevention was today announced by the Prime Minister, showing the UK's commitment on World AIDS Day to tackling the world's fourth biggest killer.

Building on the Gleneagles G8 Summit's ambitious agreements the UK government is giving £20 million to the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative and £7.5 million to the International Partnership of Microbicides.

EU Ministers, under the UK presidency, also confirmed their commitment to increased prevention by issuing a statement on a vision for an AIDS free generation – the first pan-European pledge of its kind. Meeting in London, they backed efforts to give people around the world better access to condoms and effective information.

The Prime Minister said:

“The AIDS crisis represents a human tragedy for the more than 40 million men, women and children suffering from the disease around the world. As President of the G8 and the EU, the UK is showing leadership in the global fight against AIDS through a strong commitment to increased prevention and treatment.”

“Today's funding looks to the long-term and will encourage the development of vaccines and microbicides that will benefit both the developing and developed world.”

More than one in four of the world's population live in extreme poverty. Governments worldwide have agreed to work together to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, and to other targets including universal primary education and improved healthcare. The British Government is strongly committed to these targets.

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“One of the key outcomes of the Gleneagles Summit was the biggest ever package of assistance for Africa and an agreement to work for universal access to AIDS treatment by 2010. It is now for the UK as President of the G8 to build on these commitments and move towards an AIDS-free generation.”

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Hosting the EU ministerial meeting ahead of World AIDS Day, Hilary Benn said:

“Over 3 million people die every year from AIDS. The UK is making good on promises made at the Gleneagles Summit to ensure that everyone who needs it can access prevention and get treatment. Today’s European declaration backs bold efforts to help close the prevention gap and stop new infections. No-one should die because they cannot get condoms or clean needles“

Lydia Zigomo, Africa Regional Programmes Manager for Interact Worldwide said

“We welcome today’s announcement from the UK Government to invest further funding towards HIV prevention and treatment. This investment recognizes that currently prevention efforts are far from effective and that the AIDS epidemic continues to outstrip global and national efforts to contain it.

Investing in new technologies, such as a microbicide gel, acknowledges that if the spread of the disease is to be reversed helping women and those most vulnerable to protect themselves against infection is a priority. A coordinated response is the best chance we have of turning the promise of an AIDS free generation into reality.”

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Microbicides could contribute substantially to efforts to provide women with more choice in methods to protect themselves and to reduce rates of HIV infection. 57 per cent of the 25 million adults in sub-Saharan Africa infected with HIV are women and girls, with the highest rate of new infections among young women. Women are biologically more susceptible to HIV infection than men.

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To ensure a long term solution to the control of the disease, the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative was established in 1996 to develop an accessible and effective vaccine.

This further funding for treatment and vaccines will add to the armoury in the global fight against AIDS.

Key Facts

- Forty million people worldwide are living with HIV
- Only one person in five has access to basic HIV prevention services
- AIDS has killed more than 25 million people since it was first recognised in 1981, making it one of the most destructive epidemics in recorded history
- Globally less than 5% of injecting drug users have access to harm reduction programmes, including clean needles & syringes

Notes to editors;

1. The EU Ministerial meeting was held at Salters Hall on Wednesday 30 November. A statement has been issued and can be accessed at:
www.dfid.gov.uk/eupresidency2005 (the statement is embargoed until 17.00 GMT November 30):
2. The UK government position policy paper on Harm Reduction can be found at:
<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/hivharmreduction2005.pdf>

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3. In the long-term microbicides will offer women protection from infection of HIV. The research will develop creams and gels that can be applied before having sex. The International Partnership for Microbicides (IPM) is a not-for-profit venture that aims to increase the efficiency and speed with which a safe and effective microbicide can be made available at risk of HIV infection in resource-poor settings. The total funding of IPM from DFID is £8.7 million
4. DFID's funding for microbicides now totals £50 million. In April 2005 DFID agreed further funding of £23.8 million over the next three years for the Microbicide Development Programme (MDP). An additional £1m is for advocacy and preparedness and the Global Campaign for Microbicides (GCM). DFID provided £16 million to MDP in 2001.
5. Funding for IAVI is £20 million over the period of 2005 – 2008. The total funding of IAVI from DFID is £39.8 million. The UK was the first government to support IAVI.

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