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## **Statement by UNDP Administrator Helen Clark**

### **World AIDS Day 2016 Statement**

**December 1**

This World AIDS Day serves as a reminder of the urgent need to come together as a global community and recommit ourselves to ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030—one of the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

AIDS continues to be one of the leading causes of death worldwide. UNAIDS warns that in spite of the progress made over the past 15 years, our job is far from done. While nearly fifty per cent of people living with HIV are currently accessing antiretroviral therapy, 18.5 million people are still in need of treatment.

Declines in new HIV infection rates among adults have stalled, and infection rates are climbing in some regions. In 2015 nearly 7500 young women aged 15-24 years acquired HIV every week. These trends suggest that HIV prevention efforts are falling short. There continues to be a lack of funding for human rights programming to address punitive legal environments, stigma and discrimination, and other human rights barriers which often prevent people, especially the most marginalized, from accessing health services.

At the same time, we must address other serious and often associated challenges. Last year, more than 1.8 million people died from TB, including 400,000 with HIV/TB co-infection, accounting for around one in every three AIDS-related deaths. HIV drug resistance is also of increasing concern, leading to treatment failure and further spread of drug resistant HIV, while second and third line treatments for HIV and treatment for Hepatitis C are often out of reach for many patients because of their high cost.

The Sustainable Development Goals reflect the interconnectedness of health and development, including the widening economic and social inequalities, rapid urbanization, and the continuing burden of HIV. The UNDP Strategy on HIV, Health and Development 2016-2021: *Connecting the Dots* recognizes that many areas of development have an impact on health and that multi-sectoral, rights-based, and gender-

sensitive approaches are essential to addressing HIV and health-related development challenges.

People living with HIV and civil society organisations play a crucial role in the AIDS response. UNDP is committed to working with them and with other partners around the world to redouble its efforts to end inequalities which fuel new HIV infections and act as barriers to accessing health services. Future generations depend on us to get this job done.