

WOMEN WILL TRANSFORM POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT

M. Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS
27 June 2013
Abuja, Nigeria
Opening of Global Power Women Network Africa

SPEECH

By: M. Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS

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Women will transform post-2015 development

Your Excellency President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria; President of Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf; Vice President of the Gambia Isatou Njie-Saidy; First Lady of Malawi Joyce Banda; Deputy Prime Minister; Honorable Ministers; ladies and gentlemen:

This meeting is very timely. It will help us take stock of our progress toward the Millennium Development Goals and influence the debate on the post-2015 agenda.

The latest report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly reveals clearly that we are making progress in the fight against HIV. We have 7.1 million African people on treatment—1 million more than the previous year. AIDS-related deaths have fallen 33% since 2005. There is true hope that we can stop babies being born with HIV by 2015.

But our sisters, mothers, wives and daughters are still at unacceptable risk. We are still failing women, especially young women: 60 percent of adults living with HIV in Africa are women; 31 percent of all new HIV infections are in young women age 15-24. One in eight new infections in women and girls are a result of intimate partner violence. About 14 million girls in sub-Saharan marry before age 18 every year.

It troubles me to say that our traditionally caring society is in recession. We are bombarded with news of acts of violence against women. Sexual violence is used as an instrument of war against women. This is why we brought Resolution 1983 to the UN Security Council and enabled Member States to act on the dangerous connection between HIV and sexual violence.

Gender violence is not just about numbers. It is about every girl's and woman's dignity and entitlement to enjoy all human rights. Investing in women and girls does not just help transform our economies, but contributes to peace and social justice.

What we need is a social revolution. First, we must give women and girls the power to protect themselves from HIV by giving them access to the life skills and knowledge of sexuality education. Second, this social revolution calls for a shift in the development agenda. Poverty reduction must be accompanied by an expansion of dignity and freedom for women and girls.

Third, we need to protect and preserve what we treasure. Epidemiological markers are not enough. We need equity, gender and human rights markers.

To end AIDS, we need gender equality and to uphold the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls. And to shape the future post-2015, their dignity and right must be a central pillar.

Thank you.

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UNAIDS

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) leads and inspires the world to achieve its shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. UNAIDS unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank—and works closely with global and national partners to maximize results for the AIDS response. Learn more at unaids.org and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.