

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON WORLD AIDS DAY

1 December 2011

Heading into the fourth decade of AIDS, we are finally in a position to end the epidemic.

The progress we have made so far is proof that we can realize our vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.

The number of new HIV infections has fallen by more than 20 per cent since 1997. New infections are continuing to decline in most parts of the world. In sub-Saharan Africa, the region most affected by the AIDS epidemic, HIV incidence has decreased in 22 countries.

Among populations at risk, the tide is shifting. Access to HIV prevention services are helping young people, sex workers and their clients, people who inject drugs, men who have sex with men, and transgender people to take control of their health for greater well-being.

Treatment has averted 2.5 million AIDS-related deaths since 1985. Last year alone, 700,000 lives were saved. Some 6.6 million people, nearly half those who need treatment in low- and middle-income countries, are now receiving it.

Synergies between prevention and treatment are speeding up progress.

But to end AIDS, we need to deliver even greater results.

This year in June, the United Nations General Assembly's High-Level Meeting on AIDS adopted bold targets for 2015: reduce the sexual transmission of HIV by half, eliminate new infections in children, provide treatment for 15 million people living with HIV, end stigma and discrimination, and close the AIDS funding gap.

With strong political will, reasonable financial resources and a firm human rights-based approach, we can achieve all of these targets.

Financing will be critical to success. I urge all concerned to act on the investment framework put forward by UNAIDS and to fully fund the global investment target of up to \$24 billion annually. The results would offset the upfront costs in less than one generation.

We must build on the political commitments, investments, energy, activism and determination that have brought us to this turning point.

Momentum is on our side. Let us use it to end AIDS – once and for all.