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UNICEF

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CHILDREN'S FUND

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“This is life and death and we need to keep driving through to the finish line, not just to prevent more children from being born HIV-positive, where we are making progress, but also to do something about the 2 million children around the world who are HIV-positive and who need to get on medications.”

Anthony Lake
UNICEF Executive Director

WHAT IS UNICEF?

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) believes that promoting the rights of the child and caring for the world’s children form the very foundation of human development. Active in more than 190 countries, it uses its global authority to work with partners at all levels to try to ensure that children have the very best start in life and can flourish in an environment free from poverty, inequality, discrimination and disease.

UNICEF, a founding Cosponsor of UNAIDS, is the leading voice for children in the global AIDS response. It aims for an AIDS-free generation in which all children are born free from HIV, and where children living with, and affected by, the virus have access to the treatment, care and support they need to thrive. UNICEF’s HIV response for children strives to ensure that neither age nor poverty, gender inequality nor social exclusion determines access to HIV prevention, treatment and care.

Through passionate and dynamic leadership, and in partnership with national governments and key stakeholders, UNICEF plays a critical role in galvanizing commitment, resources and action to address HIV among children. This commitment is built on a foundation of human rights, shaped by scientific and programmatic innovation, and defined by the determination of UNICEF, working with national leaders as well as with women and children themselves, to achieve zero new HIV infections, zero AIDS-related deaths and zero discrimination.

WHAT UNICEF DOES FOR THE AIDS RESPONSE

Protecting children from HIV infection is one of the top seven priority areas of UNICEF’s Strategic Plan. UNICEF is working with partners all over the world to help low- and middle-income countries to scale up effective and efficient programmes to eliminate new infections among children, provide medicines to children and their families living with HIV, prevent and treat new infections among adolescents and provide protection, care and support to families affected by HIV.

UNICEF's programming efforts for the first decade of a child's life focus on infants and children under five, pregnant women and mothers and contribute to achieving the international targets of the *Global Plan towards the elimination of new HIV infections among children by 2015 and keeping their mothers alive* and *Committing to child survival: a promise renewed*. Strengthening maternal and child health is at the forefront of efforts to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV, with an emphasis on expanding access to treatment for pregnant and breastfeeding women living with HIV and improving infant testing and access to treatment for children.

For the second decade of a child's life, UNICEF focuses on adolescents (10–19 years), especially those at higher risk of HIV exposure—adolescent girls in generalized epidemics, adolescents living with HIV and adolescent key populations (boys who have sex with other males, adolescents who inject drugs, and children and adolescents exploited in the sex industry). Emphasis is placed on supporting countries to scale up high-impact interventions to reduce HIV transmission, morbidity and mortality among adolescents. UNICEF also works across sectors to challenge vulnerability to HIV through education and by encouraging gender equality, human rights and child protection programming. Engaging young people, including young people living with HIV, in programme planning, service delivery, demand creation and monitoring and evaluation is a core element for achieving better results. Community mobilization is a critical feature of all aspects of UNICEF's HIV response.

As part of wider efforts to strengthen national social protection systems, UNICEF is working with governments and development partners to expand HIV-sensitive social protection, economic support and family-based care to strengthen the resilience of children and families and promote sustained access to HIV prevention, treatment and care. Applying UNICEF's vision for its HIV programming to fragile and humanitarian situations is especially important for ensuring that at-risk and emergency-affected populations are not excluded in times of greatest need.

Additional information is available [here](http://childrenandaids.org) (childrenandaids.org).

