

SPECIAL COMPILATION ON THE AIDS GLOBAL REPORT 2010

Please find attached the following AIDS-related articles compiled by UNAIDS

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST

1. Mail & Guardian, SA - [UNAids report of the global Aids epidemic](#)
2. New Vision, Uganda - [Sex workers causing rise in HIV](#)
3. Daily Monitor, Uganda - [Good and bad news in new report on HIV](#)
4. Health-e, SA - [World Has Turned the Corner - UNAIDS](#)
5. BuaNews, SA - [Aids epidemic changing course: UN](#)
6. Algérie.dz.com - [L'Onusida estime qu'il y a une très faible prévalence du sida en Algérie dans son dernier rapport.](#)
7. Emirates News Agency - [Global effort to halt and reverse HIV/AIDS showing results, finds UN report](#)
8. The National, UAE - [Middle East HIV infections double](#)
9. Al Jazeera - [Aids epidemic has been 'halted'](#)

ASIA AND PACIFIC

1. China Post - [New AIDS cases fall by one fifth in a decade: UN](#)
2. The Hindu, India - [India made significant improvement in tackling HIV](#)
3. The Telegraph, India - [HIV battle shows results](#)
4. The Age, Australia - [AIDS cases fall by a fifth over 10 years](#)

EUROPE

1. The Guardian, UK - [HIV infections and Aids deaths fall worldwide](#)
2. The Guardian, UK - [World Aids Day: campaigners warn HIV has not gone away](#)
3. Reuters - [U.N. Sees Global AIDS Epidemic Starting to Turn](#)
4. AFP - [New AIDS cases fall by one fifth in a decade: UN](#)
5. BBC News - [HIV epidemic 'halted', says UN](#)
6. Reuters - [FACTBOX-HIV/AIDS numbers from around the world](#)
7. The Economist, UK - [The fight against AIDS](#)
8. AFP - [Sida: recul des infections en dix ans](#)
9. Deutsche Welle - [UN melden Erfolge im Kampf gegen AIDS](#)
10. Periódico de Catalunya, Spain - [El número de infectados por sida descende a la quinta parte de 1999](#)

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

1. Trinidad Express - [Unsafe sex pushes new HIV cases in T&T](#)
2. Newsday, Trinidad & Tobago - [UNAIDS Report: 12,000 new HIV cases in TT](#)
3. El Universal, Venezuela - [65% de infectados por VIH de países en desarrollo no recibe tratamiento](#)
4. Siglo XXI, Guatemala - [VIH-Sida en la región se mantiene estable](#)
5. Crónica de Hoy, Mexico - [La ONU reporta que contagios por sida cayeron 20% en la última década](#)
6. La Nación, Costa Rica - [Propagación del sida comienza a estabilizarse en América Latina](#)
7. ABC Digital, Paraguay - [El 65% de infectados con VIH de países en desarrollo no recibe tratamiento](#)
8. Folha.com, Brazil - [ONU diz que epidemia de Aids pode ter chegado ao auge](#)

NORTH AMERICA

1. Washington Post - [As AIDS epidemic ebbs, many challenges remain](#)
2. New York Times - [U.N. Reports Decrease in New H.I.V. Infections](#)
3. USA Today - [HIV drug, drop in new cases give hope for prevention](#)
4. Los Angeles Times - [Annual global study reports progress against HIV](#)
5. CNN - [Global AIDS report shows drops in new HIV cases, AIDS-related deaths](#)

6. Voice of America News - [AIDS: Fewer People Being Infected, Fewer People Dying](#)
7. Voice of America News - [UN Reports Progress Against HIV/AIDS in Africa](#)
8. Associated Press - [3 big developments make AIDS outlook more hopeful](#)
9. Associated Press - [UN says AIDS epidemic slows, infections dropping](#)

=====

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST

=====

UNAids report of the global Aids epidemic
Mai & Guardian, SA
23/11/2010

FARANAAZ PARKER | JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

Efforts to curb the AIDS pandemic are beginning to pay off and the world is beginning to see a reversal in the spread of the syndrome. This was revealed in a global report released by the United Nations on Thursday.

According to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and Aids (UNAids), the global number of people newly infected with HIV is declining and Aids-related deaths are decreasing. The report showed that an estimated 2.6-million people became newly-infected with HIV in 2009. This was a 20% drop from the 3.1-million people infected in 1999.

"The report gives new evidence that investments in HIV prevention programming are producing significant results in many of the highest burden countries," the organisation said.

Condom use and availability have increased significantly over the past few years and the number of people on treatment has increased seven and a half times in the last five years. Globally over 5.2-million people now have access to life-saving antiretroviral treatment, compared to 700 000 in 2004.

Professor Sheila Tlou, director of the UNAids regional support team for Eastern and Southern Africa, said the report showed that people in sub-Saharan Africa were now living longer lives and fewer children are contracting the virus. "The efforts of anti-retroviral therapy are really evident especially in our region of the world."

Africa still bears the brunt
However, Eastern and Southern Africa remain the epicentre of HIV.

According to UNAids, 1.8-million people were newly infected with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa in 2009. This is more than twice as many people as were infected in the rest of the world combined last year. In addition, more than 70% of the 1.8-million deaths due to Aids last year, occurred in sub-Saharan Africa.

But Tlou warned that the battle is not yet won. "Even though the rate of HIV-infection is decreasing, there is still a need for prevention because there are two new infections for every one person put on treatment," she said.

Tlou also pointed out that 50% of new infections are acquired within marriage or cohabitation. According to Tlou, the prevalence of sero-discordant couples, where one person is HIV positive and the other is not, is very high in sub-Saharan Africa, at a rate of between 35% and 85%. Because of this, Tlou said, there is a serious need for couples counselling and testing to ensure that couples can access services like prevention, treatment, care and support.

Human rights still not guaranteed

Nonkosi Khumalo, chairperson of the Treatment Action Campaign, welcomed the news that the epidemic is stabilising and even reversing in some areas. However, she said, human rights is still an issue that needs to be addressed as part of the global response to Aids.

The UN report said that although most countries acknowledge human rights in their Aids strategies, punitive laws that criminalise same-sex relationships continue to hamper access to Aids-related services.

Khumalo said she found it disturbing when 79 states, mainly from Arab and African countries, last week voted to remove a reference to sexual orientation from a UN resolution condemning unjustified killings. South Africa's UN delegation also voted to have the reference removed.

"What was disturbing for me was that it was lead by largely African leaders," she said. "We want to say all the right things but we're failing to put into practice things that could and should work."

Khumalo said states would not be able to curb the impact of Aids unless they take into consideration marginalised groups, like sex workers and homosexual men.

"The road is still very long and activists will continue to push for human rights," she said.

Sex workers causing rise in HIV
New Vision, Uganda
24/11/2010

By Raymond Baguma and Chris Kiwawulo

TEN percent of new HIV infections in Uganda have been linked to sex workers, according to the newly released 2010 UNAIDS report on the global AIDS epidemic.

The report says paid sex remains an important factor in the HIV epidemic trend in Uganda, with infections occurring among sex workers, their clients, or their other sex partners.

It also lists Uganda among 14 African countries with condom use rates of 20% or less for people with more than one partner. The other countries are DR Congo, Ethiopia, Malawi, Rwanda and Tanzania.

The report shows that there are more women going for antenatal care in Uganda. Also, the number of Ugandan girls and boys who have had sex by the age of 15 is declining.

Also, more women have reported having had sex with more than one partner in the past year, while there is no evidence of change in the number of men with more than one sexual partner.

It adds that the number of men and women with multiple sexual partners without using condoms is declining significantly.

Trend analysis shows a general decline in the percentage of people who had more than one partner in the past year.

However, Ugandan men above 25 years are increasingly reporting multiple partners, while the number of women with more than one sexual partner has remained stable.

The report also shows that Uganda has rolled out the adult male circumcision programme, with 5,340 men circumcised between October 2008 and March 2010.

Under treatment coverage for adults and children in line with the World Health Organisation guidelines, Uganda's antiretroviral coverage for children is at 18%, while 43% of Ugandan adults have access to antiretroviral treatment.

According to the report, 1.2 million Ugandans live with HIV, while only 200,000 people are receiving antiretroviral therapy. The report also shows that around 76% of Ugandans on antiretroviral treatment continue receiving treatment one year after initiation.

The report points out that Uganda's inadequate political will and insufficient resources are challenges to increasing access to high-quality HIV/AIDS care and support services.

The scorecard for Uganda shows that the rate of HIV infection between 2001 and 2009 has remained stable at between 6.5% and 7.0%. Infection rates for Kenya have stagnated, while Rwanda and Tanzania's prevalence rates have decreased.

Global trend

The report shows that the world is beginning to reverse the spread of the virus.

"New HIV infections have fallen by nearly 20% in the last 10 years. AIDS-related deaths are down by nearly 20% in the last five years," reads the report.

The report contains data on HIV from 182 countries. It also gives new evidence that investments in HIV prevention programming are producing significant results in most of the highest burdened countries.

However, even though the number of new HIV infections is decreasing, there are two new HIV infections for every one person starting HIV treatment, which shows that HIV prevention programmes have been inadequate.

The report also points out that despite the decline in HIV adult prevalence worldwide, and increasing access to treatment, the total number of children aged 0–17 years, who have lost their parents due to HIV, has not declined.

The number of HIV orphans has increased from 14.6 million in 2005 to 16.6 million in 2009.

Almost 90% of the orphans live in sub-Saharan Africa. A total of 9 million orphans live in Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Of these, 2.5 million orphans are in Nigeria alone.

Good and bad news in new report on HIV
Daily Monitor, Uganda
24/11/2010

By Evelyn Lirri

Kampala - The number of new HIV/Aids infection has fallen globally by 19 percent, but a cap in HIV funding could reverse this trend, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/Aids (Unaids) has revealed in its annual report.

The report rates Uganda as a country that is not making progress but where the epidemic is not yet becoming worse. The report says funds available to fight HIV/Aids in 2009 totalled \$15 billion, but this is \$10 billion short of what is needed in 2010. Since the epidemic peaked in 1999, the report says its prevalence in some countries has declined by 25 per cent or more.

Expanding access to anti-retroviral treatment, which has now reached 5.2 million people living with HIV/Aids, has yielded a 19 per cent decline in deaths since 2004, but 10 million people -- mostly in developing and low income countries -- still do not have access to lifesaving drugs.

The report, based on a survey of 182 countries, also found that the epidemic was increasing in seven countries; in 23 countries, including Uganda, the epidemic was stable, and cases declined by 25 per cent or more in 33 other countries.

The report shows that Uganda's Aids prevalence has stabilised between 6.5 and 7 per cent since 2001. "We have halted and began to reverse the epidemic. Fewer people are becoming infected with HIV/Aids and fewer people are dying from Aids," said Michel Sidibe, the executive director of UNAIDS. "However, we are not yet in a position to say mission accomplished," he added.

Fight still on

Instead, recent achievements are being threatened by flattened funding for HIV/Aids worldwide. The report shows that demand for Aids treatment and care is outstripping supply.

To keep Aids-related deaths declining, countries should adopt a new and simplified HIV treatment platform called Treatment 2.0. Treatment 2.0 is a new approach of using treatment to increase prevention, making available cheaper and simplified diagnostic tools, and a low-cost community-led approach to delivery of HIV services.

This new treatment plan, according to the UN body, could bring down costs and make treatment regimens simpler compared to current approaches. If adopted, it could also avert up to 10 million deaths by 2025 and one million new infections every year.

Declining deaths

According to the report, the expansion of ARV treatment has contributed to a 19 per cent decline in deaths between 2004 and 2009. Some 1.2 million more people also had access to ARVs globally by the end of 2009, representing a 30 per cent increase.

In Uganda, the number of people accessing ARVs stands at 200,000 people, but this is far below the 322,000 who require the drugs currently. With more than 130,000 new infections occurring every year,

according to the Uganda Aids Commission, meeting a growing number of people who will need treatment will be a huge challenge.

World Has Turned the Corner - UNAIDS

Health-e, SA

24/11/2010

Kerry Cullinan

The number of new HIV infections is almost one-fifth lower than it was a decade ago, indicating that the world has "turned the corner in the fight against HIV/AIDS", according to the UNAIDS Global Report on HIV/AIDS that was released yesterday.

"The biggest epidemics in sub-Saharan Africa-Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe-have either stabilised or are showing signs of decline," according to the report.

In the past five years, antiretroviral treatment has had a "profound effect" on mortality rate, with AIDS-related deaths having decreased by 18 percent in southern Africa. Botswana, which has the region's most successful ARV programme, has cut its AIDS deaths in half.

"In 2009 alone, 1.2 million people received HIV antiretroviral therapy for the first time-an increase in the number of people receiving treatment of 30% in a single year," says UNAIDS.

The ARV roll-out in sub-Saharan Africa has been rapid, reaching almost one in four people who need it. Seven years ago, only 2 percent of people in the region were on ARVs.

In Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland, coverage of antiretrovirals for preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV reached more than 80%.

This is good news for babies, with an estimated 370 000 newborns getting HIV in 2009 as opposed to 500 000 in 2001.

In 33 countries, HIV incidence has fallen by more than 25% between 2001 and 2009. Of these countries 22 are in sub-Saharan Africa.

In contrast, however, in parts of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, including the Ukraine, Russia and Uzbekistan, HIV incidence has increased by more than 25% between 2001 and 2009. Drug addicts sharing needles is believed to be the main reason for the rapid spread of HIV in this region.

Despite the good news, sub-Saharan Africa continues to bear the brunt of the epidemic. Of the 33.3 million people living with HIV in the world, almost seven out of 10 (22.5 million) live in sub-Saharan Africa.

Of the estimated 1.8 million people who died of HIV-related illnesses worldwide, 1.3 million (72 percent) lived in sub-Saharan Africa.

South Africa still has the biggest HIV positive population in the world, with an estimated 5.6 million people living with HIV in 2009, South Africa's epidemic remains the largest in the world.

However, Swaziland has the highest HIV prevalence rate in the world, with over a quarter of adults (25.9 percent) living with HIV.

But, warns the UNAIDS, "for the estimated 33.3 million people living with HIV after nearly 30 years into a very complex epidemic, the gains are real but still fragile.

"Ten million people living with HIV who are eligible for treatment under the new WHO guidelines are still in need."

Women are still most affected by HIV in sub-Saharan Africa. The most recent prevalence data show that 13 women in sub-Saharan Africa become infected with HIV for every 10 men.

Aids epidemic changing course: UN
BuaNews, SA
24/11/2010

Pretoria - Global efforts to halt and even reverse the spread of HIV and Aids are showing welcome results, with the number of people newly infected declining and Aids-related deaths falling.

This is according to the latest report from the United Nations agency leading the fight against the disease.

The Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic 2010, produced by the Joint UN Programme on HIV and Aids (UNAIDS), contains basic HIV data from 182 countries and includes country-by-country scorecards.

It shows that an estimated 2.6 million people became newly infected with HIV, nearly 20 percent fewer than the 3.1 million people infected in 1999. In 2009, 1.8 million people died from Aids-related illnesses, nearly one-fifth lower than the 2.1 million people who died in 2004.

UNAIDS said that together, this is contributing to the stabilisation of the total number of people living with HIV in the world, although much more still needed to be done, especially in light of reduced funding for the global response to Aids.

"We are breaking the trajectory of the AIDS epidemic with bold actions and smart choices," said the Executive Director of UNAIDS, Michel Sidibe.

"Investments in the Aids response are paying off, but gains are fragile - the challenge now is how we can all work to accelerate progress."

According to the report, from 2001 to 2009, the rate of new HIV infections stabilized or decreased by more than 25 per cent in at least 56 countries around the world, including 34 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Of the five countries with the largest epidemics in the region, four countries - Ethiopia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe - have reduced rates of new HIV infections by more than 25 percent, while Nigeria's epidemic has stabilised.

Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the region most affected by the epidemic, with 69 percent of all new HIV infections. In seven countries, mostly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, new HIV infection rates have increased by 25 percent.

Among young people in 15 of the most severely affected countries, the rate of new HIV infections has fallen by more than 25 percent, led by young people adopting safer sexual practices.

Condom use and availability have increased significantly. Eleven countries - including Burkina Faso, India and Peru - report more than 75 percent condom use at last higher-risk sex. Data from 78 countries show that condom use among men who have sex with men was more than 50 per cent in 54 countries. Reports of condom use by sex workers are also encouraging - in 69 countries, more than 60 percent of sex workers used a condom with their last client.

Access to HIV prevention services, including harm reduction programmes for people who inject drugs, has reached 32 percent - far short of what is needed to protect drug users from HIV worldwide, the report noted. Even though many countries have included male circumcision in their prevention programmes, uptake at a population level remains low, and has not made a significant impact on the rate of new HIV infections.

However, UNAIDS noted in its report that even though the number of new HIV infections is decreasing, there are two new HIV infections for every one person starting HIV treatment. Investments in HIV prevention programmes as whole have not been adequate or efficiently allocated. HIV prevention investments comprise about 22 percent of all Aids-related spending in low- and middle-income countries.

In relation to the report's findings that more people are living longer and Aids-related deaths are declining as access to treatment has expanded, UNAIDS said that the total number of people on treatment increased by seven and half times over the last five years, with 5.2 million people accessing life-saving drugs in 2009, compared to 700 000 in 2004.

Over the course of the last year alone, an additional 1.2 million people received treatment - a 30 percent increase compared to 2008. In addition, there has been a secondary dividend of stopping new HIV infections with increased access to HIV treatment. But nearly twice the number of people - 10 million - are waiting for treatment. New evidence shows that scaling up treatment has led to reductions in population mortality in high-prevalence settings.

As more countries are using effective treatment regimens to prevent HIV transmission to babies, the total number of children born with HIV has decreased. An estimated 370 000 children were newly infected with HIV in 2009, representing a drop of 24 percent from five years earlier.

The report also contains new data which shows that human rights efforts are increasingly being integrated into national Aids strategies, with 89 percent of countries explicitly acknowledging or addressing human rights in their Aids strategies and 91 percent having programmes in place to reduce stigma and discrimination.

However, punitive laws continue to hamper access to Aids-related services - 79 countries worldwide criminalize same sex relations and six apply the death penalty.

UNAIDS estimates that a total of \$15.9 billion was available for the Aids response in 2009, \$10 billion short of what is needed in 2010, and that funding from international sources appears to be falling. Donor governments' disbursements for the Aids response in 2009 stood at \$7.6 billion, lower than the \$7.7 billion available in 2008.

The agency said that the declines in international investments will affect low-income countries the most - nearly 90 percent rely on international funding for their Aids programmes - and that there is an urgent need to sustain and scale up good investments and for countries to share the financial burden of the epidemic. - BuaNews-UN

L'Onusida estime qu'il y a une très faible prévalence du sida en Algérie dans son dernier rapport
Algérie.dz.com
24/11/2010

L'Organisation des Nations unies pour le Sida (Onusida) a relevé mardi que l'Algérie fait partie des pays à profil épidémiologique bas avec une séroprévalence de l'ordre de 0,1 %. Dans son rapport 2010 relatif à l'évolution du VIH-Sida dans le monde, l'organisation onusienne indique également que l'Algérie figure parmi les pays où les dons de sang sont totalement contrôlés (100 %) et "avec une qualité assurée" par les centres de dons de sang. Sur ce point, il est à rappeler que 61 centres de dépistage anonymes et gratuits ont été ouverts au niveau de l'ensemble des wilayas du pays, tandis que le dispositif institutionnel de prise en charge a été renforcé par la création de l'Agence nationale du sang, la création de 8 centres de référence de prise en charge de l'infection VIH-sida et la fourniture des antirétroviraux à titre gracieux.

Abordant les fonds mobilisés pour la prise en charge de la maladie du sida en Algérie, l'ONUSIDA affirme que la part des financements de l'Etat algérien engagés pour le traitement de cette maladie et les services annexes a largement augmenté en passant à 93,7 % de la totalité des dépenses à la fin décembre 2009 contre 69,8 % à la fin 2008, le reste des financements (6,3 %) provient notamment dans un cadre bilatéral ou onusien. Quant au nombre de personnes recevant la thérapie anti-rétrovirale, leur nombre a atteint 1.526 malades à la fin 2009 dont 51 % sont des hommes, selon la même source.

Synthèse de Rayane, www.algerie-dz.com

Global effort to halt and reverse HIV/AIDS showing results, finds UN report
Emirates News Agency
24/11/2010

WAM Geneva, 23rd Nov. 2010 (WAM) -- Global efforts to halt and even reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS are showing welcome results, with the number of people newly infected declining and AIDS-related deaths falling, according to the latest report from the United Nations agency leading the fight against the disease.

The Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic 2010, produced by the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), contains basic HIV data from 182 countries and includes country-by-country scorecards. It shows that an estimated 2.6 million people became newly infected with HIV, nearly 20 per cent fewer than the 3.1 million people infected in 1999. In 2009, 1.8 million people died from AIDS-related illnesses, nearly one-fifth lower than the 2.1 million people who died in 2004.

UNAIDS said that together, this is contributing to the stabilization of the total number of people living with HIV in the world, although much more still needed to be done, especially in light of reduced funding for the global response to AIDS.

"We are breaking the trajectory of the AIDS epidemic with bold actions and smart choices," said the Executive Director of UNAIDS, Michel Sidib "Investments in the AIDS response are paying off, but gains are fragile - the challenge now is how we can all work to accelerate progress." According to the report, from

2001 to 2009, the rate of new HIV infections stabilized or decreased by more than 25 per cent in at least 56 countries around the world, including 34 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

As more countries are using effective treatment regimens to prevent HIV transmission to babies, the total number of children born with HIV has decreased. An estimated 370,000 children were newly infected with HIV in 2009, representing a drop of 24 per cent from five years earlier.

The report also contains new data which shows that human rights efforts are increasingly being integrated into national AIDS strategies, with 89 per cent of countries explicitly acknowledging or addressing human rights in their AIDS strategies and 91 per cent having programmes in place to reduce stigma and discrimination. However, punitive laws continue to hamper access to AIDS-related services - 79 countries worldwide criminalize same sex relations and six apply the death penalty.

UNAIDS estimates that a total of \$15.9 billion was available for the AIDS response in 2009, \$10 billion short of what is needed in 2010, and that funding from international sources appears to be falling. Donor governments' disbursements for the AIDS response in 2009 stood at \$7.6 billion, lower than the \$7.7 billion available in 2008.

The agency said that the declines in international investments will affect low-income countries the most - nearly 90 per cent rely on international funding for their AIDS programmes - and that there is an urgent need to sustain and scale up good investments and for countries to share the financial burden of the epidemic
WAM/TF

Middle East HIV infections double
The National, UAE
23/11/2010

James Reinl

NEW YORK // The numbers of people becoming infected with HIV in the Middle East and North Africa has more than doubled in less than a decade, growing from 36,000 new cases in 2001 to 75,000 last year, the UN warns.

The UN's anti-HIV agency, UNAIDS, says the region has among the world's lowest infection rates of HIV, the virus that causes Aids, with only 0.2 per cent of the total population afflicted compared to a global average of 0.8 per cent.

Yet despite this low prevalence, the annual report from UNAIDS reveals that only two regions, the Middle East and North Africa (Mena) and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, are witnessing growth in the annual number of new infections.

This is against a backdrop of anti-HIV efforts in sub-Saharan Africa and other hard-hit regions contributing to a global decline in the disease, with the number of new infections falling from 3.1 million in 1999 to 2.6 million last year.

Researchers also warn that data from Mena are scarce and unreliable – meaning the statistics are only rough estimates and the true scale of the epidemic across the region could be worse than is presently understood.

Analysts typically attribute the region's low HIV prevalence to social and religious mores that limit the numbers of people engaging in high-risk behaviour, including prostitutes, injecting drug users and men who have same-sex relations.

But Tim Martineau, a programme director for the Geneva-based UNAIDS agency, said social stigma and discriminatory laws drive these groups underground – putting them beyond the reach of clinicians and data-collectors.

He said HIV infections have hitherto been concentrated in these high-risk groups, but cited new evidence indicating the disease has started spreading from these contained populations to the wider population in some areas.

The prevalence of HIV among pregnant women using healthcare services in Djibouti and southern Sudan, for example, now exceeds 1 per cent – more than five times higher than the regional average, said the UNAIDS 2010 Report on the Global Aids Epidemic.

The 360-page report describes several countries with worryingly high concentrations of the disease. In Iran, the HIV epidemic is concentrated among injecting drug users, where 14 per cent of this group lived with HIV in 2007.

In 2006, the proportion of female sex workers living with HIV was about 1 per cent in Egypt and between 2-4 per cent in Algeria, Morocco and Yemen. In Egypt, an estimated 6 per cent of men engaged in same-sex relations are living with HIV, compared to more than 8 per cent in Sudan.

"It is a concern that the numbers of infections continues to grow in the Middle East and North Africa, and there has been talk about the populations in which HIV/Aids is concentrated spreading out and infecting the more general population," said Mr Martineau. "The role of injecting drug users, men who have sex with men and sex workers in the continuing spread of the epidemic is a serious issue."

Overall, an estimated 460,000 people lived with HIV in Mena at the end of 2009, up from 180,000 in 2001. Aids-related deaths rose from 8,300 to 23,000 in the same period. Only about 12,000 sufferers received antiretroviral therapy last year out of an estimated 100,000 who need it.

Aids epidemic has been 'halted'

Al Jazeera

23/11/2010

The number of new cases of HIV/Aids has dropped by about one-fifth over the past decade, although millions of people still lack access to new methods of prevention and treatment.

In 2009, 2.6 million people contracted the HIV virus that causes Aids, down 19 per cent from the 3.1 million recorded in 2001, UNAids, the United Nation's agency spearheading the campaign, announced on Tuesday.

While positive about the growing impact prevention measures and treatment are having on the Aids epidemic, the UNAids' 2010 global report on the Aids epidemic also highlighted the dangers of backslide.

"Fifty-six nations around the world have stabilised or significantly reduced infections," Michel Sidibe, the executive director of UNAids, said.

"We have halted and begun to reverse the epidemic. Fewer people are becoming infected with HIV and fewer people are dying from Aids.

"However we are not yet in a position to say 'mission accomplished'."

Treatment

The report showed that treatment has made huge inroads in the past five years.

About 5.2 million people in poor countries had access to costly lifesaving antiretroviral medicine in poor countries last year, compared to 700,000 in 2004.

However, overall "demand is outstripping supply," Sidibe warned.

And this trend could continue - investment against HIV/Aids stopped growing for the first time last year.

"If we stop financing, the five million people who are under treatment will start to die," he warned.

An estimated 10 million people who need antiretrovirals do not have them, while "stigma, discrimination, and bad laws continue to place roadblocks for people living with HIV and people on the margins" of society, he said.

The report found that epidemics in sub-Saharan Africa, the worst hit region, were declining or stable.

Aids-related deaths there fell by 20 per cent over the past five years, while the number of people living with the HIV declined from an estimated 2.2 million to 1.8 million.

In South Africa, which has more people than any other country with the virus that causes Aids, the report says new infections have reduced by more than 25 per cent in the same time period.

Sheila Tlou, UNAids regional director for sub-Saharan Africa, says the drop in Africa is because of increased condom use, abstinence and improved awareness of AIDS.

"The efforts of anti-retroviral therapy are really evident, especially in our region of the world, sub-Saharan Africa, where because of access we have seen 20 per cent fewer deaths related to HIV than in 2004," she said.

Yet across sub-Saharan Africa, 22.5 million people are still living with HIV, more than any other region in the world, and 68 per cent of the global total of 33.3 million people, UNAids found.

'Significant' progress

In Asia, HIV stabilised at a caseload of about 4.9 million, with "significant" progress on tackling mother-to-child transmission, when pregnant women pass on the virus to their babies, UNAids said.

In India, Nepal and Thailand the rate of new infections fell by more than one-quarter.

However, the annual death toll has grown by about 50,000 to 300,000 in Asia over a decade. The pattern of disease within highly populated countries such as China and Indonesia can vary significantly.

The biggest inroads were found in North America and west and central Europe, with a 30 per cent decline in the caseload over a decade.

But new infections rose there slightly last year and UNAidsS signalled a resurgence of the epidemic among male homosexuals due to unprotected sex.

In eastern Europe and central Asia, the number of people with the virus has almost tripled over the past decade to reach about 1.4 million, while deaths grew fourfold.

Russia and Ukraine account for nearly 90 per cent of new infections in the region.

Scientific breakthrough

In news that promises to reinforce the wider "prevention revolution" heralded by Sidibe, a daily dose of an oral antiretroviral drug reduced the number of HIV infections among sexually active gay men by 44 per cent, in what scientists claimed on Tuesday is the latest breakthrough in the fight to further stem the virus's spread.

The study of the pill Truvada was conducted by the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDP) and involved 2,500 gay and bisexual men, and 29 transgender women.

Participants between the ages of 18 and 67 were drawn from six countries, including Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, South Africa, Thailand and the US.

Its authors urge people to wait for guidelines on how to use the drug safely and effectively. Condoms and safe sex remain the best ways to prevent Aids transmission, they warned.

The results will be published in the November 25 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine.

The study follows the ground-breaking results earlier this year for a microbicide gel that could help women protect themselves.

All participants in the CDP trials were given counselling on preventing the spread of the virus as well as condoms and medical care for other sexually-transmitted diseases during the course of the study.

The US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases sponsored much of the study, with additional funds provided by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

California-based Gilead Sciences, which makes Truvada, donated the drugs used.

Gay men are one of the most at-risk groups for HIV in the United States, accounting for more than half of the 56,000 new infections each year. One in five gay men living in 21 major US cities is infected with HIV and nearly half are unaware of it, according to a separate study by the CDP that was published in September.

=====

ASIA AND PACIFIC

=====

New AIDS cases fall by one fifth in past decade: UN
China Post
23/11/2010

Story also carried by Economic Times (India)

GENEVA: The number of new cases of HIV/AIDS has dropped by about one-fifth over the past decade but millions of people are still missing out on major progress in prevention and treatment, the UN said Tuesday.

In 2009, 2.6 million people contracted the HIV virus that causes AIDS, a decline of 19 per cent over the 3.1 million recorded in 2001, said UNAIDS, the UN agency spearheading the international campaign against the disease.

About half of the 60 million people who caught HIV/AIDS since the start of the pandemic 30 years ago have died, added the agency.

UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibe urged caution over the growing impact of prevention measures and medical treatment highlighted in the 2010 global report on the AIDS epidemic.

"We have halted and begun to reverse the epidemic. Fewer people are becoming infected with HIV and fewer people are dying from AIDS," he said.

"However we are not yet in a position to say 'mission accomplished'," he added in the report.

About 33.3 million people worldwide were living with the HIV virus that causes AIDS at the end of last year -- about 100,000 less than in 2008.

Sidibe heralded a "prevention revolution" in the pipeline, including a gel that could help women protect themselves and a breakthrough on drugs treatment.

The report showed that treatment has made huge inroads in the past five years.

Some 5.2 million people in poor countries had access to costly lifesaving anti-retroviral medicine in poor countries last year, compared to 700,000 in 2004.

However, overall "demand is outstripping supply," Sidibe warned, while investment against HIV/AIDS stopped growing for the first time last year.

An estimated 10 million people who need anti-retrovirals do not have them, while "stigma, discrimination, and bad laws continue to place roadblocks for people living with HIV and people on the margins" of society, he added.

The report found that epidemics in sub-Saharan Africa, the worst hit continent, were declining or stable.

India made significant improvement in tackling HIV
The Hindu, India
23/11/2010

Story also covered by Times of India, Hindustan Times, Daily News & Analysis, Express India

GENEVA - India has made remarkable progress in combating HIV/AIDS over the last ten years by reducing the overall exposure to this killer disease by 50 per cent, says a global report issued by a U.N. agency on the epidemic.

Besides, the Indian drug companies played a vital role in supplying the first-line drugs for HIV/AIDS patients in poorest African countries at phenomenally cheap prices, the UNAIDS said in its report.

"India reduced HIV/AIDS by 50 per cent while its pharmaceutical companies played a major role in care and treatment by supplying 86 per cent of the first line drugs to the poorest countries," said Mr Michel Sidibe, UNAIDS' executive director.

Around 2.4 million estimated people are living with HIV last year In India as against 2.5 million in 2001.

The UNAIDS' latest report suggested that around 33.3 million people were estimated to be living with HIV.

"We are breaking the trajectory of the AIDS epidemic with bold actions and smart choices," said Mr. Sidibe, cautioning that the disease will stage a comeback if adequate funding is not made possible by both international donors and domestic spending by the developing countries.

Over the last eight years, the rate of new HIV infections stabilised or decreased by more than 25 per cent in at least 56 countries around the world, especially in the poorest African countries.

Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the region most affected by the epidemic with 69 per cent of all new HIV infections.

While there have been significant improvements in treatment which increased by seven and half times over the last five years with 5.2 million people accessing life-saving drugs in 2009, around 10 million people are still without treatment. In India, over 600,000 HIV patients are without treatment.

He praised the Vatican for giving the green signal for the use of condoms which was treated as a religious taboo until recently. "The Pope's latest announcement on condoms will have significant impact on HIV-prevention," he argued.

The Eastern Europe and Central Asia, including Russia, have become the epicentres for the spread of HIV/AIDS in the recent years.

In Asia, including India, the spread of HIV/AIDS is concentrated in some mega cities because of large scale migration of poor people in search of employment and their exposure to sex workers.

Besides, man-to-man sex (MSM) and increased use of syringes by drug addicts in North-East have also witnessed sharp increase over the last ten years in India.

Global funding for AIDS dipped last two years because of the economic crisis in the Western countries.

Rich countries in Europe have dropped their funding for AIDS by over USD 600 million, leaving small countries to fetch funds from their domestic sources.

In India, the total expenditure for HIV/AIDS from both international and domestic is to the tune of USD 1.4 billion last year as against USD 1.5 billion in 2008.

The government which relies on Global Fund and other international donors must cater more resources from its domestic budgetary sources, said the UNAIDS chief.

UN HIV programme shows success in India
The Telegraph, India
23/11/2010

Story also carried by Hindustan Times, IBN Live, Press Trust of India

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Nov. 23: India is among 56 countries that have begun to reverse the HIV epidemic, a UN agency said today but warned about continuing new infections, funds shortage and the dangers of complacency.

The number of new HIV infections in India has dropped by 50 per cent over the past decade, from more than 240,000 new infections in the year 2000 to 120,000 new infections in 2009, UNAIDS said. New infections have dropped by more than 25 per cent in 55 other countries.

The trends captured by the global report suggest that prevention strategies such as the promotion of condoms among commercial sex workers and educational campaigns for high-risk groups have helped reduce the number of people getting infected.

"The world is truly beginning to reverse the epidemic," said Charles Gilks, UNAIDS country coordinator in India. But, he said, this is no time for complacency. "Budgets are flatlining globally, too many people are still getting infected, too many people are dying."

India has about 2.4 million people infected with HIV, and the prevalence rate among adults (15 to 49 years) is 0.3 per cent — less than the 2001 figure of 0.4 per cent. But UNAIDS officials said tens of thousands of HIV-infected people who need treatment do not get medicines.

About 320,000 people across India are currently on anti-retroviral therapy, which can prolong the lives of HIV-infected people. If new WHO guidelines for therapy are applied, the number of people in India who require drug treatment would be more than one million, Gilks said.

In the absence of treatment by anti-retroviral drugs, infected people die faster. The report estimates that about 170,000 people died from HIV infections in India last year, accounting for more than half of Asia's estimated HIV death count of 300,000.

The data, based on information from India's National AIDS Control Organisation, show that the prevalence of HIV in India is highest among intravenous drug users, followed by commercial female sex workers and men-who-have-sex-with-men.

But Gilks said India's transgender community was "probably" most at risk. This concern has prompted Indian AIDS control authorities to launch surveillance of HIV among transgender groups in Chennai, Delhi and Mumbai.

"India is doing well, but this is not the time to be complacent and reduce spending on prevention," said Gilks. "The challenge will be to prioritise prevention when budgets for treatment rise as more and more infected people seek treatment."

The UNAIDS report shows that as treatment programmes expanded, the number of AIDS-related deaths fell. More than five million HIV-positive people worldwide were receiving the anti-retroviral therapy in 2009, compared with 700,000 in 2001.

UNAIDS has warned that funding available for the response to AIDS was \$15.9 billion in 2009, which is \$10 billion short of what is needed in 2010. "Funding from international sources appears to be reducing," the agency said.

Bangladesh is among seven countries where HIV infection has worsened — the number of new infections has risen by more than 25 per cent since 2001. The number of new infections has shown little change in 23 countries, including France, Germany and the US..

AIDS cases fall by a fifth over 10 years

The Age, Australia

23/11/2010

Story also carried by Brisbane Times and Sydney Morning Herald, 9 News (Australia), Straits Times (Malaysia), Bangkok Post

The number of new cases of HIV/AIDS has dropped by about a fifth during the past decade, but millions of people are still missing out on major progress in prevention and treatment, the UN says.

In 2009, 2.6 million people contracted the HIV virus that causes AIDS, a decline of 19 per cent over the 3.1 million recorded in 2001, said UNAIDS, the UN agency spearheading the international campaign against the disease.

About half of the 60 million people who caught HIV/AIDS since the start of the pandemic 30 years ago have died, added the agency.

UNAIDS executive director Michel Sidibe urged caution over the growing impact of prevention measures and medical treatment highlighted in the 2010 global report on the AIDS epidemic.

"We have halted and begun to reverse the epidemic. Fewer people are becoming infected with HIV and fewer people are dying from AIDS," he said on Tuesday.

"However, we are not yet in a position to say 'mission accomplished'," he added in the report.

About 33.3 million people worldwide were living with the HIV virus that causes AIDS at the end of last year - about 100,000 less than in 2008.

Sidibe heralded a "prevention revolution" in the pipeline, including a gel that could help women protect themselves and a breakthrough on drugs treatment.

The report showed that treatment has made huge inroads in the past five years.

About 5.2 million people in poor countries had access to costly lifesaving anti-retroviral medicine last year, compared with 700,000 in 2004.

However, overall "demand is outstripping supply", Sidibe warned, while investment against HIV/AIDS stopped growing for the first time last year.

An estimated 10 million people who need anti-retrovirals do not have them, while "stigma, discrimination, and bad laws continue to place roadblocks for people living with HIV and people on the margins" of society, he added.

The report found that epidemics in sub-Saharan Africa, the worst hit continent, were declining or stable. The number of AIDS-related deaths there fell by 20 per cent during the past five years, while the number of people living with HIV declined from an estimated 2.2 million to 1.8 million.

In Asia, HIV stabilised at a caseload of about 4.9 million, with "significant" progress on tackling mother-to-child transmission, UNAIDS said.

In India, Nepal and Thailand the rate of new infections fell by more than a quarter.

However, the annual death toll has grown by about 50,000 to 300,000 in Asia over a decade. The pattern of disease within highly populated countries such as China and Indonesia can vary significantly.

The biggest inroads were found in North America and west and central Europe, with a 30 per cent decline in the caseload over a decade.

But new infections rose there slightly last year and UNAIDS signalled a resurgence of the epidemic among male homosexuals because of unprotected sex.

In eastern Europe and central Asia, the number of people with the virus has almost tripled over the past decade to reach about 1.4 million, while deaths grew fourfold.

Russia and Ukraine account for nearly 90 per cent of new infections in the region.

© 2010 AFP

=====

EUROPE

=====

HIV infections and Aids deaths fall worldwide

The Guardian, UK

23/11/2010

Sarah Boseley, health editor

The global Aids epidemic is gradually being turned around, with new infections and deaths falling, but UNAids warns today in its annual report that, at a time of financial cutbacks, continued progress is far from certain.

After nearly 30 years, there are 33.3 million people living with HIV, 22.5 million of whom live in sub-Saharan Africa. Some 5.2 million are on drug treatment to keep them alive and well, but 10 million more need it urgently. For these people, says UNAids, "the gains are real but very fragile. Future progress will depend heavily on the joint efforts of everyone involved in the HIV response."

Last year there were an estimated 1.8 million Aids-related deaths, which is a drop from the peak year of 2004, when 2.1 million died. There were an estimated 2.6 million new infections, which is 19% fewer than the 3.1 million infected in 1999. The estimated numbers of orphans has risen from 10 million in 2001 to 16.6 million in 2009.

The report comes at a time when funding for HIV/Aids is being reduced in response to the world economic crisis and also the drive to put more resources into other areas of global health, such as preventing the deaths of women in childbirth. The Global Fund to fight Aids, TB and Malaria recently failed to raise the

\$13bn (£8.1bn) for the next three years that it needed from donors to keep all the country programmes it finances going.

"We have halted and begun to reverse the epidemic. Fewer people are becoming infected with HIV and fewer people are dying from Aids," says Michel Sidibe, executive director of UNAids, in his foreword to the report. But, he says, it is not yet time to say "mission accomplished".

"Growth in investment for the Aids response has flattened for the first time in 2009. Demand is outstripping supply," he writes. "Stigma, discrimination and bad laws continue to place roadblocks for people living with HIV and people on the margins."

There have been dramatic improvements in 33 countries, where HIV incidence has fallen by more than a quarter between 2001 and 2009. A third of them (22) are in sub-Saharan Africa. The number of new infections in sub-Saharan Africa is down from 2.2 million a year in 2001 to 1.8 million in 2009. Some of that is a result of prevention efforts, which appear to be changing unsafe sexual behaviour and increasing condom use in some countries, while some is a result of "the natural course of HIV epidemics", says the report.

But those countries that have stabilised still have very high HIV levels. South Africa, with an estimated 5.6 million people living with HIV last year, has the largest epidemic in the world and Swaziland, at 25.9%, has the highest adult HIV prevalence.

In spite of the progress, many countries will miss millennium development goal six, which is to halt by 2015 and start to reverse the spread of HIV/Aids and other infectious diseases. With a shifting of the world's focus to MDGs four and five, on children and maternal health, the UNAids report points out that tackling infectious diseases is still critical.

"The millennium development goals are intertwined. Without achieving substantive progress towards the HIV-specific Goal 6, few other goals are likely to be reached," the report says. "Likewise, without integration and significant progress towards most other goals being made, goal 6 will probably not be achieved."

World Aids Day: campaigners warn HIV has not gone away
The Guardian, UK
23/11/2010

Sarah Boseley

Aids has finally gone out of fashion, almost 30 years after the pandemic began. It is no longer front-page news. There was a time when Europe and the US had to be seen to help the millions who were dying of an incurable illness in the developing world, but with some stability evident in the pandemic and a gradual decline in the death rate, attention has turned to other things.

Arguably that's how it should be. HIV/Aids is not the world's only killer disease, let alone the only health problem that developing countries have to deal with. Nor are tuberculosis and malaria, even though they are similarly devastating. What about malnourished children, women who die in childbirth and the increasing toll being taken by heart disease, diabetes and cancers?

In line with the times, this year's annual report from the World Health Organisation is on the unsexy but fundamental issue of health-system strengthening – a phrase that will never capture public attention in the way that the battle against Aids did. The logic is impeccable – more nurses, better equipped clinics, fewer stock-outs of essential medicines lead to healthier populations.

The health workers who counsel people with HIV should also be weighing malnourished babies and immunising newborns. It makes no sense to have separate streams of funding, paying for parallel teams of people in designated Aids clinics seeing only those who may have HIV.

And according to the latest UNAids report, out this week, all the numbers are going in the right direction. UNAids compares the latest figures, for 2009, with the peak years, which makes progress look impressive.

So the 2.6m new infections in 2009 are one-fifth less than in 1999. Aids-related deaths, says the report, have come down to 1.8m a year from a high of 2.1m in 2004.

The number of people living with HIV has gone up, from 26.2 million in 1999 to 33.3 million – but that is a result of a reduction in the numbers dying as well as the rise in the numbers getting infected.

The roll-out of antiretroviral drugs to keep people alive has transformed the prospects for those with HIV. Aids is no longer a death sentence. A third of those who need drugs are getting them – 5.2 million now out of 15 million.

Progress it certainly is. "For the third time, the report is revealing that we are breaking the trajectory of the Aids epidemic," said Michel Sidibé, executive director of UNAids. "It is important for the world to know that. People are living longer today."

He scrolls through the achievements – both treatment and prevention are having an effect. The epidemic is slowing down.

But comparing the figures with last year shows how painfully slow progress is and how far there is to go. New infections are down from 2.7m to 2.6m in a year. Deaths are down from 2m to 1.8m. We can talk about a slow-down, but we are nowhere near the end of Aids. And experts worry that if the focus slackens, the epidemic could begin to move the other way.

All the progress happened because of the momentum behind Aids, says Sidibé. "We are seeing a reduction in financial commitments. We know that the world is facing a major financial crisis, but I think it would be terrible if countries were to stop giving treatment to the 5 million people who have been put on it. And I'm not talking about the 10 million whose lives are in the balance because they don't have access to treatment at all."

Keeping the effort going on prevention – safer sex, single partners, use of condoms and other messages – is vital, but the first evidence that progress may be being unpicked will probably come from those who are on drugs or who need them and are turned away because the stocks have dried up. Their deaths will be measurable. And the warning signs are there already.

"It is happening in many places," said Sidibe, talking of stock-outs in Uganda and Zambia. "People are sending me messages every day, saying what will happen to our sick people?"

The funding has flat-lined, as donors replace Aids as their main concern with maternal and child health or health-system strengthening in general. The most telling indicator is that the Global Fund to fight Aids, TB and Malaria, which donors fund to give grants to poor countries initiating prevention and treatment programmes, fell short of its minimum fund-raising target in September, only weeks after a massive summit on the Millennium Development Goals in New York, which should have excited donors' generosity.

In theory, a switch in resources out of Aids into maternal and child health – the new fashion – or into health systems should not matter. All health goals are interlinked. Preventing HIV in women and their babies is crucial to safe delivery. Strong health systems will better prevent and treat HIV.

But there are dangers. Aids grabbed public and political attention in a way that "systems" will struggle to do.

And, as Sidibé pointed out, it has shone an unheard-of light on the inequalities of women and turned the plight of sex workers and drug users into a human rights issue. It has also, through the tough accountability measures of the Global Fund, delivered aid transparency as never before – officials trying to pocket Aids money in several countries have been jailed.

The next few years will tell whether, in the effort to extend successes in HIV/Aids into progress across the field of global health, anything has been lost.

U.N. Sees Global AIDS Epidemic Starting to Turn

Reuters

23/11/2010

Story carried by EuroNews, The Star (Malaysia), New York Times, Daiwn (Pakistan), Himalayan Times (Nepal)

By Kate Kelland, Health and Science Correspondent

LONDON (Reuters) - An estimated 33.3 million people worldwide have the HIV virus that causes AIDS, but the global health community is starting to slow down and even turn the epidemic around, a United Nations report said on Tuesday.

The total number of HIV-infected people in 2009 was down slightly from the previous year's 33.4 million and at least 56 countries have either stabilised or achieved significant declines in rates of new HIV infections.

Yet while more than 5 million of those who need life-saving AIDS drugs are getting them, around two-thirds of the 15 million people in poorer countries who need them cannot get them. Marginalised groups like drug users and sex workers are far less likely to get help than others, according to the 2010 global update by the Joint U.N. Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

"For the first time, we can say that we are breaking the trajectory of the AIDS epidemic. We have halted and begun to reverse the epidemic. Fewer people are becoming infected with HIV and fewer people are dying from AIDS," UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibe said as the report was released.

Since the beginning of the epidemic in the 1980s, more than 60 million people have been infected with HIV and nearly 30 million have died of HIV-related causes.

The human immunodeficiency virus that causes AIDS can be controlled with cocktails of drugs, but there is no cure.

The UNAIDS report found that new HIV infections have reduced by nearly 20 percent in the past 10 years, and among young people in 15 of the most severely affected countries, rates of HIV have fallen by more than 25 percent as the young adopt safer sexual practices.

There are still two new HIV infections for every one person starting HIV treatment.

"Just a few years ago, there were five new infections for every two people starting treatment," Sidibe said in a telephone interview. "We are closing the gap between prevention and treatment."

But he stressed the numbers did not mean the world could declare "mission accomplished" on tackling AIDS.

He said he was worried about a slowdown in growth of funds to fight AIDS, with international donor investment flattening for the first time in 2009, and about significant barriers for marginalised groups such as drug users in getting the HIV prevention and care services they need.

UNAIDS said there was an estimated \$15.9 billion (£118.4 billion) available for the global AIDS response in 2009, \$10 billion short of the estimated need.

"Demand is outstripping supply. Stigma, discrimination and bad laws continue to place roadblocks for people living with HIV and people on the margins," Sidibe said.

The report found there are 10 million people still in need of HIV/AIDS treatment who do not have access to it. It also found that one in four AIDS deaths is caused by tuberculosis, a preventable and curable disease.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the region of the world hardest hit by HIV and AIDS, there were 1.3 million AIDS-related deaths in 2009 and 1.8 million people became newly infected with HIV.

Eric Goosby, the global AIDS coordinator for U.S. President Barack Obama's administration, said the report was "welcome news" to those fighting the AIDS epidemic.

"It demonstrates that success can be achieved in the battle against AIDS," he said in a statement. But he too added that the fight was "far from over". (Editing by Janet Lawrence)

New AIDS cases fall by one fifth in a decade: UN
AFP
23/11/2010

Story carried by France24, Jakarta Globe, Indian Express, Hindustan Times (India), Asian Age, Pak Tribune, Tehran Times

By Agnes Pedrero

GENEVA — The number of new cases of HIV/AIDS has dropped by about one-fifth over the past decade but millions of people are still missing out on major progress in prevention and treatment, the UN said on Tuesday.

In 2009, 2.6 million people contracted the HIV virus that causes AIDS, down 19 percent from the 3.1 million recorded in 2001, said UNAIDS, the UN agency spearheading the international campaign against the disease.

"Fifty-six nations around the world have stabilised or significantly reduced infections," UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibe told journalists.

But about half of the 60 million people who caught HIV/AIDS since the start of the pandemic 30 years ago have died, according to the agency.

Sidibe urged caution over the growing impact of prevention measures and medical treatment highlighted in the 2010 global report on the AIDS epidemic and warned about a slowdown in finance.

"We have halted and begun to reverse the epidemic. Fewer people are becoming infected with HIV and fewer people are dying from AIDS," he said.

"However we are not yet in a position to say 'mission accomplished'," he added in the report.

About 33.3 million people worldwide were living with the HIV virus that causes AIDS at the end of last year -- about 100,000 less than in 2008.

The UNAIDS chief heralded a "prevention revolution" in the pipeline, including a gel that could help women protect themselves, and a breakthrough on drugs treatment.

The report showed that treatment has made huge inroads in the past five years.

Some 5.2 million people in poor countries had access to costly lifesaving anti-retroviral medicine in poor countries last year, compared to 700,000 in 2004.

However, overall "demand is outstripping supply," Sidibe warned, while investment against HIV/AIDS stopped growing for the first time last year.

"If we stop financing, the five million people who are under treatment will start to die," he warned.

An estimated 10 million people who need anti-retrovirals do not have them, while "stigma, discrimination, and bad laws continue to place roadblocks for people living with HIV and people on the margins" of society, he added.

The report found that epidemics in sub-Saharan Africa, the worst hit continent, were declining or stable.

AIDS-related deaths there fell by 20 percent over the past five years, while the number of people living with the HIV declined from an estimated 2.2 million to 1.8 million.

In Asia, HIV stabilised at a caseload of about 4.9 million, with "significant" progress on tackling mother-to-child transmission, UNAIDS said.

In India, Nepal and Thailand the rate of new infections fell by more than a quarter.

However, the annual death toll has grown by about 50,000 to 300,000 in Asia over a decade. The pattern of disease within highly populated countries such as China and Indonesia can vary significantly.

The biggest inroads were found in North America and west and central Europe, with a 30 percent decline in the caseload over a decade.

But new infections rose there slightly last year and UNAIDS signalled a resurgence of the epidemic among male homosexuals due to unprotected sex.

In eastern Europe and central Asia, the number of people with the virus has almost tripled over the past decade to reach about 1.4 million, while deaths grew fourfold.

Russia and Ukraine account for nearly 90 percent of new infections in the region.

Copyright © 2010 AFP. All rights reserved

HIV epidemic 'halted', says UN
BBC News
23/11/2010

Story also carried by Post of Zambia, The Nation (Pakistan)

The number of new HIV infections and deaths from Aids are falling globally, according to new statistics from the UN's programme on HIV/Aids.

There are now signs the epidemic is declining, it says, however, stigma and discrimination continue to cause problems for the estimated 33m people living with HIV.

Last year there were 2.6m new HIV infections.

This is down almost 20% since the peak of the Aids epidemic in 1999.

In 2009, 1.8m died from Aids-related illnesses, down from 2.1m in 2004.

Mixed progress

The report says rates of treatment using anti-retroviral drugs have risen from 700,000 in 2004 to over 5m people in 2009.

Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the region most affected by the epidemic, with around 70% of all new HIV infections occurring here.

But infection rates are falling, particularly in South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia.

There is a mixed picture in other parts of the world.

Eastern Europe and central Asia show sharp rises in new infections and Aids-related deaths.

And the UN says bad laws and discrimination, particularly in respect to drug users and homosexuals, continue to hamper the fight against Aids.

"We are breaking the trajectory of the Aids epidemic with bold actions and smart choices," said Mr Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS.

"Investments in the Aids response are paying off, but gains are fragile—the challenge now is how we can all work to accelerate progress."

FACTBOX-HIV/AIDS numbers from around the world

Reuters

23/11/2010

Nov 23 (Reuters) - Here are some global data on HIV and AIDS from the latest update report by the Joint U.N. Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

THE GLOBAL PICTURE:

- * An estimated 33.3 million people worldwide had the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes AIDS in 2009, according to the latest figures issued by (UNAIDS). There were 26.2 million in 1999.
- * There were an estimated 1.8 million AIDS-related deaths around the world in 2009.
- * One in four AIDS deaths is caused by tuberculosis, a preventable and curable disease.
- * Since the AIDS pandemic started in the early 1980s, more than 60 million people have been infected with HIV and nearly 30 million have died of HIV-related causes.
- * In 2009, there were 2.6 million new HIV infections, down from 3.1 million in 1999.
- * Around 370,000 children were born with HIV in 2009, bringing to 2.5 million the total number of children under 15 living with HIV.

* AFRICA & ASIA:

- * An estimated 1.8 million people were newly infected with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa in 2009, bringing to 22.5 million the number of Africans who have HIV.
- * There were 1.3 million AIDS-related deaths in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2009.
- * The nine countries in southern Africa continue to bear a disproportionate share of the global AIDS burden. Each of them has an adult HIV rate of more than 10 percent.
- * South and South East Asia, home to 60 percent of the world's population, is second only to sub-Saharan Africa in terms of people living with HIV. An estimated 4.1 million people there had HIV in 2009. Around 260,000 people died in the region in 2009.
- * In East Asia, some 770,000 people had HIV in 2009 and 36,000 suffered AIDS-related deaths.

OTHER REGIONS:

- * Some 1.5 million people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia have HIV.
- * In Central and South America, new HIV infections were an estimated 92,000 in 2009, bringing to 1.4 million the number of people there who have HIV. An estimated 68,000 people died of AIDS-related illnesses there in 2009.
- * There were around 2.3 million people with HIV in North America and western and central Europe in 2009 and there were 101,000 new HIV infections in that year.

SOURCE: UNAIDS/Reuters (Compiled by David Cutler, London Editorial Reference Unit; editing by Kate Kelland)

The fight against AIDS

The Economist, UK

23/11/2010

ON NOVEMBER 23rd UNAIDS, the UN body charged with combatting the AIDS epidemic, released its latest report. This carries good news. Though some 33m people are infected, the rate of new infections is falling—down from 3.1m a year a decade ago to 2.6m in 2009. Moreover, as the map shows, the figure is falling

fastest in many of the most heavily infected countries. The reason is a combination of behavioural change (people are losing their virginity later, are being less promiscuous and are using condoms more), a big reduction in mother-to-child transmission at birth and through breast-feeding, and the roll-out of drug treatment for those already infected. Besides prolonging life, antiretroviral drugs make those taking them less likely to pass the virus on. More than 5m people in poor and middle-income countries are now on these drugs, though another 10m could benefit. (The remainder of those infected are not yet ill enough for the drugs to do them good.) The problem, as always, is money. UNAIDS reckons the fight needs about \$25 billion a year to be fully effective. At the moment, the sum spent is around \$17 billion. Not a bad fraction of what is needed, but one that it will be difficult to sustain in the face of the world's current economic difficulties.

See chart: http://www.economist.com/blogs/dailychart/2010/11/fight_against_aids

Sida: recul des infections en dix ans

AFP

23/11/2010

Story also carried by La Croix, El Watan, TV5, France Soir, Le Point, L'Express, Le Monde, France 24, RTBF, Le Parisien, La Voix du Nord, Les Echos, Le Nouvelliste, Journal du Jura (CH), 24Heures, Le Temps (CH), 7sur7, Le Vif.be, Le Figaro

De Agnès PEDRERO

GENEVE — Le nombre de nouvelles infections du Sida dans le monde a baissé de près d'un cinquième en dix ans et de nouvelles avancées sont encore possibles grâce notamment au nouveau gel microbicide, selon le rapport annuel d'Onusida publié mardi.

Quelque 30 millions de personnes sont mortes du sida depuis l'apparition de la maladie et 60 millions ont été infectées, explique le document de l'organisme onusien établi en collaboration avec l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS).

"Depuis 1999 -- année où l'épidémie aurait atteint son maximum --, le nombre de nouvelles infections dans le monde a reculé de 19%", atteignant 2,6 millions en 2009, précise-t-il.

"Nous pouvons être fiers de ces avancées et de ce que réserve notre avenir commun", souligne le directeur exécutif d'Onusida, Michel Sidibé, cité dans le rapport.

D'autres avancées sont encore à venir, prévoit le responsable onusien. "Dans le cadre de la révolution de la prévention, des progrès décisifs se dessinent grâce aux essais d'un nouveau gel microbicide qui suscitent de l'espoir pour toute une génération de femmes", relève-t-il.

Les résultats d'essai d'un gel microbicide réalisés par le centre Caprisa en Afrique du Sud et publiés à Vienne en juillet lors de 18ème Conférence mondiale sur le sida laissent espérer la mise au point d'un nouvel outil pour contrôler l'épidémie.

L'élargissement de l'accès au traitement est également source de progrès. En 2009, 5,2 millions de personnes vivant dans des pays à revenu faible ou intermédiaire avaient accès au traitement antirétroviral, contre 700.000 en 2004.

Mais "nous ne sommes toutefois pas encore en mesure de crier victoire. En 2009, la croissance des investissements dans la riposte au sida a ralenti pour la première fois", avertit M. Sidibé.

15,9 milliards ont été mis à la disposition de la riposte au sida en 2009, montant auquel il manque 10 milliards pour couvrir les besoins en 2010, déplore Onusida.

Par région, l'Afrique subsaharienne demeure la plus touchée avec plus des deux tiers (67%) de l'ensemble des personnes vivant avec le VIH et près des trois quarts (72%) des décès liés au sida en 2009, selon les données collectées par Onusida. Le Swaziland était toujours l'an dernier le pays le plus infecté au monde, avec un taux de prévalence du VIH de 25,9 dans la population adulte.

Toutefois, dans 22 pays d'Afrique subsaharienne, le taux d'incidence du VIH a diminué de plus de 25% entre 2001 et 2009.

Et parmi les cinq pays d'Afrique subsaharienne où l'épidémie est la plus importante, quatre (Afrique du Sud, Ethiopie, Zambie et Zimbabwe) ont réduit les infections de plus de 25% entre 2001 et 2009, tandis que l'épidémie au Nigeria s'est stabilisée.

En Asie, l'épidémie de VIH demeure "stable" avec 4,9 millions de personnes vivant avec le virus, un chiffre qui n'a pratiquement pas changé en cinq ans, grâce notamment aux efforts de prévention de la transmission mère-enfant, relève le rapport.

Mais les "tendances générales de l'épidémie masquent d'importantes variations" dans la région asiatique.

En Chine, par exemple, 5 des 22 provinces du pays abritent 53% des personnes vivant avec le sida. Et tandis qu'en Inde, Népal et Thaïlande, le taux d'incidence des nouvelles infections a baissé de plus de 25% entre 2001 et 2009, il a augmenté de plus de 25% au Bangladesh et aux Philippines.

Par ailleurs, en Europe orientale et Asie centrale, le nombre de nouvelles infections (1,4 million) a pratiquement triplé entre 2000 et 2009, la Russie et l'Ukraine concentrant près de 90% des nouveaux cas.

Copyright © 2010 AFP. Tous droits réservés

UN melden Erfolge im Kampf gegen AIDS

Deutsche Welle

24/11/2010

GENÈVE: Die Vereinten Nationen sehen erstmals dauerhafte Erfolge im Kampf gegen die Ausbreitung von AIDS. Die Zahl der Neuinfektionen mit dem HI-Virus konnte einem neuen Bericht des UN-AIDS-Programms -UNAIDS- zufolge in den vergangenen zehn Jahren um fast 20 Prozent gesenkt werden, auf rund 2,6 Millionen im Jahr 2009. Damit sei es gelungen, eine Wende einzuleiten, sagte UNAIDS-Direktor Michel Sidibé in Genf. Insbesondere in Afrika, wo rund zwei Drittel der weltweit 33 Millionen Infizierten leben, steckten sich deutlich weniger Menschen an. Die UN führen diese Entwicklung auf bessere Behandlungs- und Präventionsmaßnahmen zurück. Deutlich ungünstiger sei die Entwicklung in Osteuropa und Teilen Zentralasiens. Dort steige die Zahl der Infizierten und Erkrankten weiter.

El número de infectados por sida desciende a la quinta parte de 1999

El Periódico de Catalunya, Spain

23/11/2010

Story covered in Spain by: El País, El Mundo, EFE, El Economista (Reuters)

Aumenta el acceso a los tratamientos retrovirales pero aún hay 10 millones de infectados sin tratar

El número de infectados por sida continúa descendiendo en todo el mundo y se cifró el año pasado en 2,6 millones de personas, la quinta parte de la cifra de hace diez años, según el informe anual de Onusida publicado hoy, y menos de los 3,1 millones que se infectaron en el 2008.

El síndrome de inmunodeficiencia adquirida (sida) se ha cobrado la vida de unos 30 millones de personas desde la aparición de la enfermedad, a principios de los años 80. Unos 60 millones de personas han sido

infectadas por el virus, según el informe, elaborado entre el organismo de la ONU y la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) de las que 33,3 millones siguen vivas.

"Desde 1999, año en que la epidemia llegó a su cota máxima (26,2 millones de afectados), el número de nuevas infecciones en el mundo ha retrocedido alrededor de un 19%", señala. "Podemos estar satisfechos de estos avances y de lo que supone para nuestro porvenir común", afirma el director ejecutivo de Onusida, Michel Sidibé, en el informe. Asimismo, la prevalencia del VIH entre los jóvenes

de los 15 países más afectados por la epidemia se ha reducido en un 25% gracias a la adopción de prácticas sexuales de menos riesgo.

Pese a estas cifras, el documento también señala que solo un 35% de los infectados de países en desarrollo tienen acceso a tratamiento antirretroviral. Es decir, 5,2 millones de los 15 millones de infectados que viven en países en desarrollo. El lado positivo recae en el hecho de que en el 2004 sólo 700.000 personas recibían tratamiento. Además, solo en el 2009, 1,2 millones de personas obtuvieron antirretrovirales por primera vez, un incremento del 30% respecto al 2008, el mayor crecimiento en un sólo año.

Menos inversión

La extensión del tratamiento antirretroviral ha contribuido a la reducción del 19% en los decesos ligados a la epidemia entre el 2004 y el 2009. Sin embargo, el informe redactado por la agencia de las Naciones Unidas para el Sida señala que en el 2009 se invirtieron 15.900 millones de dólares en el mundo para la respuesta al sida (todos los orígenes incluidos), es decir, 10.000 millones menos que los 26.800 millones necesarios para financiar la respuesta en el 2010. De hecho, los montos entregados por los países donantes a la respuesta al sida en el 2009 fueron de 7.600 millones, es decir, menos de los 7.700 desembolsados en el 2008.

Por regiones, África Subsahariana cuenta con 22,5 millones de personas infectadas y una prevalencia en adultos del 5%; Asia del Sur y sureste asiático, 4,1 millones y 0,3%; Asia del Este, 770.000 casos y 0,1%; América Central y América del Sur, 1,4 millones y una prevalencia del 0,5%.

América del Norte cuenta con 1,5 millones de infectados y una prevalencia en adultos del 0,5%; Europa Occidental y Central, 820.000 y 0,2%; Europa Oriental y Asia Central, 1,4 millones y 0,8%; El Caribe, 240.000 y 1%; Oriente Medio y África del Norte, 460.000 y 0,2 por ciento; y Oceanía, 57.000 casos y 0,3% de prevalencia.

=====

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

=====

Unsafe sex pushes new HIV cases in T&T

Trinidad Express

23/11/2010

THE rate of new HIV infections in four Caribbean countries has decreased for the past nine years but remained unchanged in Trinidad and Tobago, which recorded 12,000 new infections for that period.

In a media release yesterday, UNAIDS provided details from its 2010 report, which has basic data from 182 countries.

The report found for the period 2001 to 2009, the incidence rate of HIV infection decreased by more than 25 per cent in Belize, Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Suriname, and was stable in Haiti. The data showed the decline in new HIV infections was the result of safer sex practices.

It was a different story in other Caribbean countries, such as Trinidad and Tobago, the Bahamas and Barbados, where "the adult HIV prevalence remained high or has increased". It was found overall, 50 new HIV infections occurred every day in the region and in 2009, there were between 230,000 and 290,000 people living with HIV in the wider Caribbean.

The release stated overall prevention programmes did not reach the most at-risk populations, namely men who have sex with men, female and male sex workers, crack cocaine users and prisoners, and the prevalence of HIV in these groups was very high.

"Therefore, more effort is necessary to reach out to these key population groups in the society if the prevention programmes have to achieve greater impact," the release added.

The report found for the previous nine years, new HIV infections have fallen by 14.3 per cent in the Caribbean but below the 20 per cent global decline. It also found the direct impact of antiretroviral treatment has resulted in a 43 per cent decline in AIDS-related deaths, which was well above the 20 per cent global decline in the previous nine years.

"These data show that prevention is working and treatment is having a positive impact on lives of people living with HIV," said director of the UNAIDS Caribbean Regional Support Team Ernest Massiah.

UNAIDS noted in the Caribbean, during the past five years, 72 per cent of all resources allocated to HIV were from external sources.

"This needs to be changed, and national authorities have to commit national resources to respond to HIV if gains made have to be sustained and expanded," the organisation added.

UNAIDS suggested this change could take the form of new approaches, including integration of interventions, decentralisation of services and focusing national attention and resources on population groups where new HIV infections are occurring.

UNAIDS Report: 12,000 new HIV cases in TT
Newsda, Trinidad & Tobago
24/11/2010

Trinidad and Tobago recorded 12,000 new HIV cases during the ten-year period of 2001 to 2009 according to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) 2010 Report on the global AIDS epidemic.

In a release, UNAIDS said in Bahamas, Barbados and TT, the prevalence of HIV in adults remained high or has increased. However, in the Dominican Republic, there was a decline in new infections from 0.6 percent in 2002 to 0.3 percent in 2007 among young people due to safer sex practices.

Data has shown that in the Caribbean over the past ten years, new HIV infections have fallen by 14.3 percent.

In 2001, fewer than 21,000 were newly infected while in 2009, 18,000 persons contracted the disease. Belize, Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Suriname have all had a decrease in their rate of new HIV infection while Haiti has stabilised its rate.

Antiretroviral treatment has resulted in a decrease of AIDS-related deaths from 21,000 in 2001 to 12,000 in 2009 which is a 43 percent decline. This is well above the global decline of 20 percent in the past ten years.

A total number of 110,000 needed treatment but only 52,400 received treatment which represents a 48 percent coverage rate.

Also in 2009, 4,400 pregnant women living with HIV have benefited from interventions preventing HIV transmissions to their babies. This represents an increase in coverage from 22 percent in 2005 to 59 percent. At the end of 2009 an estimated 260,000 people are living with HIV in the wider Caribbean.

The release said more effort is necessary to reach the most-at-risk populations such as gay men, female and male sex workers, crack-cocaine users and prisoners if the prevention programmes are to achieve greater impact.

However, UNAIDS has called on Caribbean national authorities to commit national resources to respond to HIV if these positive changes are to be sustained and expanded.

65% de infectados por VIH de países en desarrollo no recibe tratamiento
El Universal, Venezuela
23/11/2010

Story also carried by Paraguay.com

Ginebra.- A pesar de que el número de nuevas infecciones de VIH-Sida en el mundo se ha reducido casi un 20 por ciento en la última década, sólo un 35 por ciento de los infectados de países en desarrollo tienen acceso a tratamiento antirretroviral, según alerta el Informe Mundial de ONUSIDA, publicado hoy.

Actualmente, 33,3 millones de personas en el mundo viven con el virus del VIH, contra 26,2 millones en 1999.

Sin embargo, el número de nuevas infecciones se reduce año a año. En el 2009 se contabilizaron 2,6 millones de nuevas infecciones, mientras que en el 2008 fueron 3,1 millones.

Asimismo, la prevalencia del VIH entre los jóvenes de los 15 países más afectados por la epidemia se ha reducido en un 25 por ciento gracias a la adopción de prácticas sexuales de menos riesgo.

No obstante, de casi los 15 millones de infectados que viven en países en desarrollo, sólo 5,2 reciben tratamiento, por lo que 10 millones de personas en el mundo no tienen acceso a los antirretrovirales.

El lado positivo recae en el hecho de que en el 2004 sólo 700.000 personas recibían tratamiento, indicó Efe.

Además, sólo en el 2009, 1,2 millones de personas obtuvieron antirretrovirales por primera vez, un incremento del 30 por ciento respecto al 2008, el mayor crecimiento en un sólo año.

La extensión del tratamiento antirretroviral ha contribuido a la reducción del 19 por ciento en los decesos ligados a la epidemia entre el 2004 y el 2009.

Sin embargo, el informe redactado por la agencia de las Naciones Unidas para el Sida señala que en el 2009 se invirtieron 15.900 millones de dólares en el mundo para la respuesta al sida (todos los orígenes incluidos), es decir, 10.000 millones menos que los 26.800 millones necesarios para financiar la respuesta en el 2010.

De hecho, los montos entregados por los países donantes a la respuesta al Sida en el 2009 fueron de 7.600 millones, es decir, menos de los 7.700 desembolsados en el 2008.

Por regiones, África Subsahariana cuenta con 22,5 millones de personas infectadas y una prevalencia en adultos del 5 por ciento; Asia del Sur y Sudeste Asiático, 4,1 millones y 0,3 por ciento; Asia del Este, 770.000 casos y 0,1%; América Central y América del Sur, 1,4 millones y una prevalencia del 0,5 por ciento.

América del Norte cuenta con 1,5 millones de infectados y una prevalencia en adultos del 0,5; Europa Occidental y Central, 820.00 y 0,2%; Europa Oriental y Asia Central, 1,4 millones y 0,8%; El Caribe, 240.000 y 1%; Oriente Medio y África del Norte, 460.000 y 0,2 por ciento; y Oceanía, 57.000 casos y 0,3% de prevalencia.

Desde el inicio de la epidemia, más de 60 millones de personas se infectaron con el virus del VIH-Sida y cerca de 30 millones murieron por causas ligadas a la enfermedad. (EFE)

VIH-Sida en la región se mantiene estable
Siglo XXI, Guatemala
24/11/2010

Ginebra. La epidemia de VIH-Sida en América Central y América del Sur, tanto desde el punto de vista de nuevas infecciones como de fallecimientos ligados a la enfermedad, se ha mantenido estable en el último decenio, recoge el Informe Mundial de Onusida publicado en Bélgica.

En la región latinoamericana, 1.4 millones de personas conviven con el VIH, lo que representa una prevalencia de la epidemia entre la población adulta del 0.5%.

Según las estimaciones, 36 mil menores de América Central y América del Sur viven con el VIH, contra los 30 mil que lo hacían en 2001.

Los datos del informe revelan que el número de fallecimientos ligados a la enfermedad en la región en 2009 fueron 58 mil, mientras que en 2001 ascendieron a 51 mil.

El número de nuevas infecciones contabilizadas en 2009 en la región latinoamericana fue de 92 mil, mientras que en 2001 fueron 99 mil.

Asimismo, las nuevas infecciones en menores de menos de 15 años fueron "relativamente débiles", unas 4 mil.

En concordancia

Este descenso anual y la estabilización en la década está en línea con lo que sucede en el mundo en general, dado que en 2009 se contabilizaron 2.6 millones de nuevas infecciones, mientras que en 2008 fueron 3.1 millones.

De hecho, al menos 56 países han estabilizado o conseguido disminuciones significativas de las tasas de infecciones por el virus.

"El nuevo informe de Onusida muestra que se ha conseguido detener la epidemia de sida y que el mundo está comenzando a reducir la propagación del VIH", enfatizó ante periodistas presentes, Michel Sidibé, director ejecutivo de la agencia de las Naciones Unidas.

"En la región latinoamericana hay una buena cobertura de tratamiento antirretroviral", destaca el texto, algo que no sucede en el resto del mundo, dado que sólo un 35% de los infectados de países en desarrollo tiene acceso a medicamentos específicos.

Actualmente, 33.3 millones de personas en el mundo viven con este virus, contra 26.2 millones en 1999.

La ONU reporta que contagios por sida cayeron 20% en la última década
Crónica de Hoy, Mexico
24/11/2010

Agencias en Nueva York

Con tono optimista y a pesar de que la ayuda para enfrentar la epidemia del sida es cada vez menor, ayer la agencia de Naciones Unidas para el Sida (Onusida), presentó su último informe sobre la epidemia y reveló que este mal está cambiando su curso, ya que el número de nuevas infecciones por VIH va a la baja, al igual que los decesos relacionados con el sida. Ambas tendencias contribuyen a la estabilización de afectados por el mal, unos 33.3 millones, en al menos 56 países gracias a esfuerzos de prevención y tratamiento.

Según el reporte, en 2009 unos 2.6 millones de personas se infectaron de VIH, 20 por ciento menos a los 3.1 millones de 1999. "Estamos desviando la trayectoria de la epidemia de sida con acciones audaces y decisiones inteligentes", aseguró Michel Sidibé, director ejecutivo de Onusida.

Desde el inicio de la epidemia en 1981, más de 60 millones de personas se infectaron con el virus del VIH-sida y cerca de 30 millones murieron por causas ligadas a la enfermedad.

Propagación del sida comienza a estabilizarse en América Latina
La Nación, Costa Rica
23/11/2010

Durante la última década América Latina ha logrado estabilizar tanto las nuevas infecciones con el virus de inmunodeficiencia humana (VIH) como los fallecimientos relacionados con el sida, enfermedad en que puede degenerar la infección

El número de nuevas infecciones contabilizadas para el 2009 en la región latinoamericana fue de 92.000, unos 7.000 casos menos que en el 2001, que registró 99.000 infecciones nuevas.

Los avances en la lucha contra el VIH se recogen en el más reciente informe mundial de Onusida, publicado ayer.

De acuerdo con ese documentos, en Latinoamérica viven 1,4 millones de personas con VIH. En el 2002, eran 1,1 millones de personas quienes tenían ese virus.

Asimismo, las nuevas infecciones en personas menores de 15 años fueron “relativamente débiles”, unas 4.000.

“El nuevo informe de Onusida muestra que se ha conseguido detener la epidemia de sida y que el mundo está comenzando a reducir la propagación del VIH”, señaló Michel Sidibé, director ejecutivo de Onusida.

Según este organismo de las Naciones Unidas, 36.000 menores de edad de América Central y América del Sur viven con el VIH, contra los 30.000 que lo hacían en el 2001.

Los datos del nuevo informe revelan que el número de fallecimientos ligados a la enfermedad en la región en el 2009 fueron 58.000, mientras que en el 2001 ascendieron a 51.000 casos.

En el mundo. Esta estabilización está en línea con lo que sucede en el mundo en general tras años de campaña de sensibilización y educación sexual, dado que en el 2009 se contabilizaron 2,6 millones de nuevas infecciones, mientras que en el 2008 fueron 3,1 millones. Al menos 56 países han estabilizado o conseguido descensos significativos de las tasas de infecciones por VIH.

En la región latinoamericana, las relaciones sexuales entre hombres son el principal modo de transmisión del VIH.

Además, “en la región latinoamericana hay una buena cobertura de tratamiento antirretroviral”, destaca el informe, algo que no sucede en el resto del mundo, dado que solo un 35% de los infectados de países en desarrollo tiene acceso a medicamentos específicos.

De casi los 15 millones de infectados que viven en países en desarrollo, solo 5,2 millones reciben tratamiento, por lo que 10 millones de personas en el mundo no tienen acceso a los antirretrovirales.

“La mayor disponibilidad de tratamientos antirretrovirales ha provocado un aumento del número de personas que logran vivir con el VIH, pasando de 1,1 millones en el 2001 a 1,4 millones en el 2009”, señala el informe.

En el mundo, la extensión del tratamiento antirretroviral ha contribuido a la reducción de casi el 20% en los decesos ligados a la epidemia entre el 2004 y el 2009.

Precisamente, este martes se informó de que la toma diaria de una combinación de antirretrovirales reduce en un 44% el riesgo de infectarse por VIH entre homosexuales.

El experimento se realizó en Brasil; se tomó diariamente un antirretroviral conocido como Truvada, que combina emtricitabina (200 miligramos) y tenofovir (300 miligramos).

No obstante, la población analizada también tuvo acceso a extensos servicios de prevención, entre ellos, consejos para reducir el riesgo, preservativos y cuidados médicos para tratar otras enfermedades venéreas durante la realización del estudio clínico.

El 65% de infectados con VIH de países en desarrollo no recibe tratamiento

ABC Digital, Paraguay

23/11/2010

GINEBRA. A pesar de que el número de nuevas infecciones de VIH-Sida en el mundo se ha reducido casi un 20 por ciento en la última década, sólo un 35 por ciento de los infectados de países en desarrollo tienen acceso a tratamiento antirretroviral, según alerta el Informe Mundial de ONUSIDA, publicado hoy.

Actualmente, 33,3 millones de personas en el mundo viven con el virus del VIH, contra 26,2 millones en 1999.

Sin embargo, el número de nuevas infecciones se reduce año a año.

En el 2009 se contabilizaron 2,6 millones de nuevas infecciones, mientras que en el 2008 fueron 3,1 millones.

Asimismo, la prevalencia del VIH entre los jóvenes de los 15 países más afectados por la epidemia se ha reducido en un 25 por ciento gracias a la adopción de prácticas sexuales de menos riesgo.

No obstante, de casi los 15 millones de infectados que viven en países en desarrollo, sólo 5,2 reciben tratamiento, por lo que 10 millones de personas en el mundo no tienen acceso a los antirretrovirales.

El lado positivo recae en el hecho de que en el 2004 sólo 700.000 personas recibían tratamiento.

Además, sólo en el 2009, 1,2 millones de personas obtuvieron antirretrovirales por primera vez, un incremento del 30 por ciento respecto al 2008, el mayor crecimiento en un solo año.

La extensión del tratamiento antirretroviral ha contribuido a la reducción del 19 por ciento en los decesos ligados a la epidemia entre el 2004 y el 2009.

Sin embargo, el informe redactado por la agencia de las Naciones Unidas para el Sida señala que en el 2009 se invirtieron 15.900 millones de dólares en el mundo para la respuesta al sida (todos los orígenes incluidos), es decir, 10.000 millones menos que los 26.800 millones necesarios para financiar la respuesta en el 2010.

De hecho, los montos entregados por los países donantes a la respuesta al Sida en el 2009 fueron de 7.600 millones, es decir, menos de los 7.700 desembolsados en el 2008.

Por regiones, África Subsahariana cuenta con 22,5 millones de personas infectadas y una prevalencia en adultos del 5 por ciento; Asia del Sur y Sudeste Asiático, 4,1 millones y 0,3 por ciento; Asia del Este, 770.000 casos y 0,1%; América Central y América del Sur, 1,4 millones y una prevalencia del 0,5 por ciento.

América del Norte cuenta con 1,5 millones de infectados y una prevalencia en adultos del 0,5; Europa Occidental y Central, 820.000 y 0,2%; Europa Oriental y Asia Central, 1,4 millones y 0,8%; El Caribe,

240.000 y 1%; Oriente Medio y África del Norte, 460.000 y 0,2 por ciento; y Oceanía, 57.000 casos y 0,3% de prevalencia.

Desde el inicio de la epidemia, más de 60 millones de personas se infectaron con el virus del VIH-Sida y cerca de 30 millones murieron por causas ligadas a la enfermedad.

ONU diz que epidemia de Aids pode ter chegado ao auge
Folha.com, Brazil
23/11/2010

Estima-se que 33,3 milhões de pessoas sejam portadoras do vírus da Aids no mundo, mas a epidemia está começando a se desacelerar e até a ser revertida, segundo um relatório divulgado nesta terça-feira pela ONU

O total de soropositivos em 2009 era ligeiramente inferior aos 33,4 milhões do ano anterior. Mas estima-se que cerca de 10 milhões de pacientes em países pobres não tenham acesso a medicamentos importantes para controlar a doença.

Crianças e grupos marginalizados, como usuários de drogas e profissionais do sexo, também têm menos chances de receber tratamento do que os demais pacientes, de acordo com o relatório da Unids (agência da ONU para o combate à doença).

"Pela primeira vez, podemos dizer que estamos rompendo a trajetória da epidemia de Aids. Paramos e começamos a reverter a epidemia. Menos gente está sendo contaminada com o HIV, e menos gente está morrendo de Aids", disse Michel Sidibé, diretor-executivo da Unids.

Desde o início da epidemia, na década de 1980, mais de 60 milhões de pessoas já foram contaminadas pelo vírus, e quase 30 milhões morreram. A Aids pode ser controlada com remédios, mas não há cura.

O relatório da Unids diz que a taxa de novas contaminações caiu quase 20% nos últimos dez anos, e que a queda na incidência foi ainda mais acentuada --acima de 25%-- entre os jovens nos 15 países mais afetados, o que mostra uma disseminação das práticas sexuais mais seguras.

Mesmo assim, ainda há duas pessoas sendo contaminadas para cada paciente que começa a ser tratado. "Há poucos anos, havia cinco novas infecções para cada duas pessoas que iniciavam o tratamento", disse Sidibé por telefone. "Estamos reduzindo a lacuna entre prevenção e tratamento."

Mas ele salientou que não é o caso de declarar "missão cumprida" contra a Aids, pois há preocupação com a redução nas verbas para o combate à doença, que em 2009 se mantiveram estáveis pela primeira vez.

A Unids disse que havia em 2009 cerca de US\$ 15,9 bilhões disponíveis para o combate à doença, ou US\$ 10 bilhões aquém do necessário.

"A demanda está superando a oferta. Estigma, discriminação e leis ruins continuam representando obstáculos às pessoas que vivem com HIV e a pessoas marginalizadas", disse Sidibé.

=====

NORTH AMERICA

=====

As AIDS epidemic ebbs, many challenges remain

Washington Post

23/11/2010

Story carried by Boston Globe

By David Brown, Washington Post Staff Writer

The AIDS epidemic has crested and started to recede almost everywhere in the world, but it has left behind millions of people who urgently need treatment if they are going to avoid adding to the disease's toll of 30 million dead over the past 30 years.

That is the gist of the annual portrait of the global AIDS epidemic, released Tuesday by UNAIDS, an agency of the United Nations and World Bank.

AIDS incidence and mortality have been declining for several years, and the new report, which includes data through the end of 2009, confirms that the trend is clear and undeniable.

"We can say with confidence and conviction that we have broken the trajectory of the HIV/AIDS epidemic," said Paul De Lay, deputy director of UNAIDS, which is based in Geneva. "There are fewer people infected, and there are fewer people dying."

The downward decline is the consequence of many forces, including sexual behavior change among young people, success in preventing mother-to-child transmission of the virus, and the lower infectious risk of people who are successfully taking AIDS drugs. It also reflects the epidemic's natural history, in which the annual number of new infections peaks and then declines as the disease "saturates" high-risk groups in the population.

In 2009 there were 33.3 million people living with HIV infection, compared with 26.2 million in 1999. However, the number of new infections in 2009 was down 16 percent from a decade ago - 2.6 million versus 3.1 million. The number of AIDS-related deaths peaked in 2004 at 2.1 million, and last year was down to 1.8 million.

Among the hopeful trends is the rapid increase in the number of people in the developing world taking the combination antiretroviral therapy that since 1996 has revolutionized AIDS care in rich countries.

In 2009 there were 5.2 million people in the developing world on the drugs, a 30 percent increase over the previous year. (Treatment of about 2.5 million of those people is paid for by the U.S. government). However, 10 million people need treatment but aren't getting it.

The report also described some discouraging developments.

In more than a half-dozen countries, HIV infection rates went up more than 25 percent in the past decade. In the United States and Western Europe, an epidemic in gay and bisexual men continues to grow unabated. There are still two new people becoming infected for every one person who starts treatment, although that is better than two years ago, when there were five new infections for every two people starting treatment.

In 2009, about \$15.9 billion was spent on the global AIDS response, with slightly more than half the money provided by low- and middle-income countries. However, much more money, about \$26.8 billion, is needed annually to fully fund treatment, care and prevention, the report said.

Equally troubling, according to the report, was that in 2009 the amount of money - \$7.6 billion - provided by wealthy countries to treat and prevent AIDS overseas was a tad lower than in the previous year.

"This is coming at the wrong moment, just as we are seeing the investment pay off," said Michel Sidibe, executive director of UNAIDS. "For me, it will be immoral to bring more than 5 million people on treatment and to possibly then say, 'We do not have the means to pay for that treatment.' "

Sub-Saharan Africa is home to about two-thirds of the people in the world living with HIV. The continent's total number of infected, about 22.5 million, continues to grow, in part because of the longer survival of people who have started taking antiretroviral drugs. In 22 of the region's nations, however, the annual number of new infections has dropped by more than 25 percent in the past decade.

A dramatically upward trend has occurred in a few places.

In Eastern and Central Europe, the number of people with HIV has tripled since 2000, with the most infections acquired through drug use.

The number of children infected at birth has fallen nearly 25 percent in five years. The fraction of infected pregnant women who get medicines to prevent passing the virus to their babies is just over 50 percent, up from 35 percent in 2007. But only 15 percent of the women are then put on a permanent course of antiretroviral therapy, which is a big problem, Sidibe said.

"We need to make sure that when we save the baby that we don't abandon the mother. That is a major challenge that I am fighting to make sure we change," he said.

U.N. Reports Decrease in New H.I.V. Infections
New York Times
23/11/2010

Story carried by Pittsburgh Post Gazette

By DONALD G. McNEIL Jr.

Fewer people are being infected with the virus that causes AIDS than at the epidemic's peak, but progress against the disease is still halting and fragile, the United Nations' AIDS-fighting agency reported Tuesday.

In its new report on the epidemic, Unaid said 2.6 million people became newly infected with H.I.V., the virus that causes AIDS, in 2009 — almost 20 percent fewer than in the late 1990s.

But progress is spotty. About 25 countries are doing better at prevention, including several in southern Africa with sky-high AIDS rates.

South Africa, which has the world's worst epidemic, has benefited from the changeover from the presidency of Thabo Mbeki, which was hostile to the distribution of AIDS drugs, to that of Jacob Zuma, who has publicly

taken an AIDS test and urged citizens to do the same. Still, it faces an estimated 350,000 to 500,000 new infections annually.

In one area, progress has been heartening: giving mothers drugs to prevent the infection of their babies at birth or through breastfeeding.

"We've had a 50 percent reduction of infections among young people in South Africa, which is a huge reservoir," Michel Sidibé, executive director of Unaid, said in an interview in Manhattan last week.

Mr. Sidibé gave several reasons for the change.

"Relations between parents and children over discussing sexuality are changing," he said. "Previously, no one would talk about it. Now, more people are willing to talk to their children."

Also, he said, people are sleeping around somewhat less. "In 59 countries we surveyed, only 25 percent said they had had more than one partner in the last year," he said. "That is a big shift."

And, he said, while posters urging everyone to use condoms are not particularly effective, government health agencies have gotten better at "concentrating on hot spots" like sex workers and long-haul truckers.

In countries like Senegal and Malawi, Mr. Sidibé said, "there has been a sea change in attitudes toward men who have sex with men."

In countries that jailed homosexuals or simply denied that there were any, gay men have been released from prison. Instead of driving gay men underground, some governments are trying to reach them with safe-sex education and condoms.

At the same time, some countries are becoming worse, especially those in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, where the epidemic is concentrated among heroin-injectors and their sexual partners. As Afghan and southeast Asian heroin spreads along new distribution routes, more addicts are created, increasing AIDS infections in countries with little history of dealing with them.

There are exceptions. In Iran, Mr. Sidibé said, he accompanied a woman in a chador who was handing out condoms in prison.

"I was shocked," he said. "In Iran, the prisons had one of the most progressive programs. There was methadone maintenance; there was condom distribution. They even had conjugal visits for prisoners — five hours in a private room every three months with your wife. With condoms."

There is also both good and bad news on the treatment front. About 5.2 million people are getting antiretroviral drugs — more than ever before, thanks to the multinational Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and its strictly American counterpart, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. But 10 million more still need the treatment immediately, and it seems unlikely that donors will give enough money to keep them all alive.

Also, some people have developed resistance to first-line drugs, but the money for more expensive second- and third-line drugs is not there.

It is now nearly 30 years since the epidemic began, and an estimated 33.3 million people are living with H.I.V. That number has never been higher, and its growth is due to a combination of new infections and the receipt of life-prolonging treatment by more of the sick.

But a comparison illustrates how much progress still needs to be made before it can be said that the world is winning the war on AIDS: in its previous report, Unaid estimated that for every 100 people put on treatment each year, 250 became newly infected. Now, it estimates that for every 100 on treatment, 200 become infected.

See chart: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/24/world/africa/24infect.html?_r=1&scp=4&sq=AIDS&st=cse
A version of this article appeared in print on November 24, 2010, on page A4 of the New York edition.

HIV drug, drop in new cases give hope for prevention
USA Today
24/11/2010

By Steve Sternberg, USA TODAY

The global AIDS epidemic has taken a turn for the better with fewer new infections than a decade ago, but overall progress is slow and much work lies ahead, the United Nation's leading AIDS agency reported Tuesday.

A new report by UNAIDS says that 2.6 million people became infected with HIV, the AIDS virus, in 2009, about 20% fewer new infections than 1999 when the epidemic was at its peak. The news comes a day after researchers reported that a daily dose of a widely available HIV drug, Truvada, can prevent infections in gay and bisexual men.

Greater access to treatment has also driven down AIDS deaths and increased the number of people living with HIV. Deaths dropped from 2.1 million worldwide in 2004 to 1.8 million last year, a drop of nearly 20%. By the end of last year, 33.3 million people were estimated to be living with an HIV infection, up from 32.8 million a year earlier.

"The decline in HIV infections globally is encouraging news," says Kevin Fenton, director of HIV prevention for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "But real challenges lie ahead. For example, the 5 million people on treatment today represents only a third of the people in need."

"The reality is, because there's no cure, there's no vaccine, the only way to end the epidemic is by ending new infections," Fenton says, adding that's going to take a global push to adopt new approaches to prevention, expand HIV counseling and testing, and combat the stigma and discrimination that breeds risky behavior and keeps people from seeking preventive services and treatment.

Researchers say the Truvada drug could prove to be a key factor in the battle against HIV. A major study showed for the first time that Truvada, a drug duo widely used to treat the AIDS virus, can block HIV infection.

The drug duo consists of tenofovir and emtricitabine, packaged as a once-daily pill and sold in drugstores. It reduced HIV infections by an average of 44% among gay and bisexual men who took the drug, compared

with those taking a placebo. Men who reported being the most diligent about taking their pill each day reaped an even bigger benefit, reducing their risk by 73%.

"This is a huge step forward," says lead researcher Robert Grant, at the J. David Gladstone Institutes at the University of California-San Francisco, a non-profit research foundation that carried out the study.

David Paltiel of Yale University says that his research shows that Truvada could be as cost-effective a prevention method as those used to combat heart disease diabetes and cancer, despite its \$8,700 annual cost.

The findings have bred new enthusiasm in a field where, for years, optimism was rare. Over 30 years, HIV has infected 40 million people. But this year alone, researchers have demonstrated that a pill and a vaginal gel (containing a component of Truvada) can prevent HIV and shown that a vaccine could work.

"This is a very exciting, dynamic time in HIV prevention research," said Alan Bernstein, head of the Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise, a non-profit effort to accelerate vaccine research. "It couldn't come at a better time. There's clearly a growing realization that we're not going to be able to treat our way out of this epidemic."

Over the next two or three years, researchers hope to determine whether Truvada also works in heterosexuals and drug users.

Annual global study reports progress against HIV
Los Angeles Times
23/11/2010

Story carried by Chicago Tribune

By Thomas H. Maugh II, Los Angeles Times

More than 1.2 million people began taking anti- HIV therapy in 2009, a 30% increase that brings the worldwide total to 5.2 million, UNAIDS said Monday in its annual report, but that still leaves 10 million people in the developing world in need of access to the lifesaving drugs.

Since the pandemic peaked in 1999, new infections have fallen by 19% — in some key countries by 25% or more. Expanding access to treatment has yielded a 19% decline in deaths since 2004.

"That clearly demonstrates that with confidence and conviction we have broken the trajectory of the AIDS epidemic," Dr. Paul De Lay, deputy executive director of the UNAIDS program branch, said at a news conference Monday. "Fewer are infected, fewer are dying."

But those gains are at risk because of the economy, Bernhard Schwartlander, chief epidemiologist at UNAIDS, said at the news conference. "In 2009, for the first time, the funds available for fighting the epidemic were less than in the previous year."

In 2008, international funding was \$7.7 billion. The next year, it dropped to \$7.6 billion. The United Nations estimates that achieving its goal of universal access to AIDS drugs will require at least \$15 billion a year.

Eric Goosby, U.S. global AIDS coordinator, said in a statement that this country has been stretching its funding through a variety of approaches, including switching from air transportation for medications to ocean and land transport and increasing the use of generic drugs.

In a report last week in the British Medical Journal, Dr. Eran Bendavid of Stanford University Medical School and his colleagues said it has been possible to continue expanding treatment programs amid slow funding growth because of substantial declines in drug prices brought about by the use of generics: a drop from \$1,177

per year per patient in 2003 to \$96 in 2008. But they said those price drops are unlikely to continue and that further expansion will require new infusions of funds.

Schwartlander called on low-income countries to carry a bigger share of the burden, noting that "90% of AIDS spending in low-income countries now comes from international sources. That creates a dependency we must overcome."

But A. Cornelius Baker, an AIDS expert on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, cautioned that it was important to continue to provide support for people in the poorest countries. "People should not have to spend themselves into poverty to stay alive," he said.

"Even when drugs are made available much more cheaply than in the United States, when they are living on \$2 a day," it is simply not feasible for them to pay for the drugs, he said.

Some of the most impressive gains noted in the new report have been in sub-Saharan Africa, which has borne the brunt of the AIDS pandemic. In 22 countries in the region, the incidence of HIV infections fell by at least 22% from 2001 to 2009 as a result of education and prevention programs. Nearly 37% of adults and children in the region who were eligible for antiretroviral therapy in 2009 received it, compared with just 2% seven years earlier.

Not all the news is good. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the number of people living with HIV almost tripled from 2000 to 2009, climbing to 1.4 million people. Russia and Ukraine are particular problem areas, accounting for nearly 90% of all new infections in the region.

The epidemic there is concentrated primarily among drug abusers, sex workers and, to a lesser extent, gay males.

Authorities are also seeing a resurgence in HIV infections among gay males in the United States and Europe, according to the report. The total number of people living with HIV in the two regions grew from 1.8 million in 2001 to 2.3 million in 2009, with about 35,000 deaths in 2009, compared with 37,000 in 2001.

thomas.maugh@latimes.com

Copyright © 2010, Los Angeles Times

Global AIDS report shows drops in new HIV cases, AIDS-related deaths

CNN

23/11/2010

By the CNN Wire

(CNN) -- New HIV infections have decreased by almost 20 percent in the past decade, and AIDS-related deaths are down by about one-sixth in five years, according to a new United Nations report released Tuesday.

Data from the 2010 UNAIDS Report on global AIDS shows that an estimated 2.6 million people became newly infected with HIV, compared with the estimated 3.1 million people infected in 1999.

In 2009, approximately 1.8 million people died from AIDS-related illnesses, compared with the roughly 2.1 million in 2004, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) said in a news release.

Among young people in 15 of the most severely affected countries, the rate of new HIV infections has fallen by more than 25 percent, led by young people adopting safer sexual practices, according to UNAIDS.

"We are breaking the trajectory of the AIDS epidemic with bold actions and smart choices," Michel Sidibe, executive director of UNAIDS, said. "Investments in the AIDS response are paying off, but gains are fragile - the challenge now is how we can all work to accelerate progress."

The 2010 report includes HIV data from 182 countries.

But not all the news is good.

"Even though the number of new HIV infections is decreasing, there are two new HIV infections for every one person starting HIV treatment," UNAIDS said.

Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the region most affected by the epidemic, with 69 percent of all new HIV infections, according to UNAIDS.

In seven countries, mostly in eastern Europe and central Asia, new HIV infection rates have increased by 25 percent.

UNAIDS said in the Asia-Pacific region, 90 percent of countries have laws that obstruct the rights of people living with HIV.

Despite the lower numbers of new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths, UNAIDS said the demand for resources is surpassing the supply.

"Donor governments' disbursements for the AIDS response in 2009 stood at \$7.6 billion, lower than the \$7.7 billion available in 2008," UNAIDS said. "Declines in international investments will affect low-income countries the most -- nearly 90 percent rely on international funding for their AIDS programs."

AIDS: Fewer People Being Infected, Fewer People Dying

Voice of America News

23/11/2010

Joe DeCapua

A new report from UNAIDS says significant progress is being made against HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. The findings are contained in the 2010 report on the global AIDS epidemic

The latest report shows the number of newly infected people in sub-Saharan Africa fell in 2009 to about 1.8 million. That compares to around 2.2 million in 2001.

It also says in 22 sub-Saharan countries, the number of new infections declined by more than 25 percent between 2001 and 2009. This includes four of the five countries with the largest HIV epidemics -- namely Ethiopia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Strategy working

Paul De Lay, UNAIDS deputy executive director, says, "This report clearly demonstrates that with confidence and conviction we have broken the trajectory of the AIDS epidemic. Fewer people are becoming infected with HIV and fewer people are dying from AIDS."

Overall, it's estimated 33-million people worldwide are living with HIV/AIDS – the vast majority in sub-Saharan Africa.

"New HIV infections have fallen by nearly 20 percent in the last 10 years. AIDS-related deaths have fallen by nearly 20 percent in the last five years," says De Lay, adding, "At least 56 countries that have sufficient data for study have stabilized or significantly slowed down the rate of new HIV infections."

Nigeria is one of the countries where the HIV epidemic is now reported stabilized. But De Lay warns all the news is not positive.

"There are some regions," he says, "where new HIV infections are on the rise, especially in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The report also shows that there are epidemics occurring in sub-populations. In particular, there is a resurgence of HIV in young men who have sex with men in North America and Western Europe."

Despite that, the new UNAIDS report shows that prevention can be successful.

Behavior change and prevention

Bernhard Schwartlander, director of the agency's evidence, strategy and results department, says, "We have seen that in more and more countries people are actually adopting safer behaviors. In 59 countries, for example, less than 25 percent of the men report having sex with more than one partner in the last 12 months, which clearly is a positive trend that can be linked in many countries also with decreases in the number of new infections."

Success can also be seen in preventing HIV transmission from infected mothers to their newborns.

"Fewer children are being born with HIV. New infections among infants have dropped by 24 percent in the last five years. And in 2009, we estimate that this number stands at 370,000, which of course is still the target to be overcome," he says.

People with HIV/AIDS are also living longer due to the greater availability of anti-retroviral drugs. More than 5.2 million people in developing countries are receiving treatment. However, UNAIDS estimates there are 10 million people, with advanced stages of HIV/AIDS, who still need access to treatment.

Schwartlander says although it can be seen that investments are paying off, economic austerity is placing those gains in jeopardy.

"For the first time ever over the past decade or 20 years," he says, "the resources available from international sources in 2009 were less than the resources made available from international donors in the previous year in 2008. While the difference is not dramatic, it clearly indicates that there's a difference in the trend after having seen significant increases from year to year. This doesn't seem to be the case anymore."

The report also says there are still high levels of stigma and discrimination surrounding the disease some 30 years into the epidemic. For example, the report

says in 79 countries and areas, same sex relationships are still criminalized. Some countries even impose the death penalty for those convicted of having such relationships.

What's more, UNAIDS says violence against women and the fear of violence block many women from having access to HIV/AIDS related services.

UN Reports Progress Against HIV/AIDS in Africa
Voice of America News
23/11/2010

Scott Bobb | Johannesburg

The United Nations says progress is being made worldwide against the HIV/AIDS virus, as fewer people are becoming infected and fewer are dying from the disease. The report also cites progress in sub-Saharan Africa, where two-thirds of all HIV victims live, but says greater efforts are needed in the struggle.

The United Nations report on HIV/AIDS says expanded treatment has dramatically reduced deaths from the virus in sub-Saharan Africa, but the region remains the most affected in the world.

The report said new HIV infections on the continent declined by nearly 20 percent since 2001, and dramatically improved access to treatment has lowered deaths by 20 percent in five years.

The director of UNAIDS for Eastern and Southern Africa, Sheila Tlou, said this was the good news in the battle against HIV, which attacks the immune system and has killed 30 million people in the past three decades.

But she warned against complacency.

"Even though the number of HIV infections is decreasing, there is still a need for prevention, because there are two new HIV infections for every one person that is put on HIV treatment," said Tlou.

She noted that southern and eastern Africa still bear the brunt of the epidemic, with five percent of the world's population, but one-half of all HIV victims.

Nevertheless, the report notes that new infections had declined by more than 25 percent in four of the African countries with the largest HIV epidemics - Ethiopia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe - and had stabilized in a fifth, Nigeria.

South Africa's deputy minister of Health, Gwen Ramokgopa, praised the report for highlighting progress as well as challenges.

"We are encouraged that, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa - including in our country, South Africa - we are seeing the dawn of a new era, where we are starting to halt the epidemic. And, indeed, we need to consolidate our efforts so that we can get into a phase of reversal," said Ramokgopa.

The report says the epidemic is having a particularly heavy impact on African women, who account for three-fourths of HIV infections worldwide. It says for every 10 men who become infected in Africa, HIV infects 13 women.

It said stigma and discrimination also discouraged marginalized groups, such as sex workers, gays and drug users, from accessing testing and treatment on the continent.

But it said new infections among young people declined by 25 percent in the most affected countries between 2000 and 2008. And, it said, infection of African children had declined by 32 percent between 2004 and 2009, a reflection of the increased access to treatment by pregnant women.

Tlou concluded that the battle against HIV/AIDS was far from over, noting that funding for the effort last year fell \$10 billion short of the amount needed.

"Yeah, we have the good news. But the AIDS response is fragile. It needs to be kept alive. It needs to be kept alive with funding. Domestic funding is still very low," said Tlou.

She urged African governments to rely less on international donors, noting that, although many African governments have pledged to devote at least 15 percent of their budget to health and HIV/AIDS, only a few have done so

3 big developments make AIDS outlook more hopeful

Associated Press

23/11/2010

Story carried by Washington Post, Kansas City Star, Washington Observer, Richmond Times Dispatch. KyPost, Naples Daily News, Philippine Star and other local media throughout the US

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE

-- In the nearly 30 years the AIDS epidemic has raged, there has never been a more hopeful day than this. Three striking developments took place Tuesday: U.N. officials said new HIV cases are dropping dramatically worldwide. A study showed that a daily pill already on pharmacy shelves could help prevent new infections in gay men. And the pope opened the way for the use of condoms to prevent AIDS.

"I don't know of a day where so many pieces are beginning to align for HIV prevention and treatment, and frankly with a view to ending the epidemic," said Mitchell Warren, head of the AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition, a nonprofit group that works on HIV prevention research. "This is an incredibly opportune moment and we have to be sure we seize it."

President Barack Obama said the groundbreaking research on the AIDS drug "could mark the beginning of a new era in HIV prevention."

The U.N. report said that new cases dropped nearly 20 percent over the last decade and that 33.3 million people are living with HIV now.

"We can say with confidence and conviction that we have broken the trajectory of the AIDS pandemic," said UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibe in Geneva.

Health officials credit part of the decline to wider condom use, and on Tuesday, in a historic shift in church teachings, the Vatican said that using a condom is a lesser evil than infecting a sexual partner with HIV.

Condoms remain the best weapon against AIDS, and the new prevention pill is not the chemical equivalent. But scientists called it a true breakthrough. The pill, Gilead Science's Truvada, is already used to treat

people with HIV. A three-year global study found that daily doses cut the risk of infection in healthy gay and bisexual men when given with condoms, counseling and other prevention services.

The drug lowered the chances of infection by 44 percent, and by 73 percent or more among men who took their pills most faithfully. Researchers had feared the pills might give a false sense of security and make men less likely to use condoms or to limit their partners, but the opposite happened - risky sex declined.

The results are "a major advance" that can help curb the epidemic in gay men, said Dr. Kevin Fenton, AIDS prevention chief at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But he warned they may not apply to people exposed to HIV through male-female sex, drug use or other ways. Studies in those groups are under way.

Because Truvada is already on the market, the CDC is rushing to develop guidelines for doctors who want to use it to prevent HIV, and urged people to wait until those are ready.

As a practical matter, price could limit use. The pills cost \$5,000 to \$14,000 a year in the United States, but roughly \$140 a year in some poor countries where they are sold in generic form.

Whether insurers or government health programs should pay for them is one of the tough issues to be sorted out, said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. *Continued*

Full-text: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/11/23/AR2010112302324.html>

UN says AIDS epidemic slows, infections dropping
Associated Press
23/11/2010

By Nastasya Tay

Story widely carried in US, Canada, UK and Ireland

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — The global AIDS epidemic has slowed with a 20 percent decrease in new HIV infections over the past decade, the United Nations' AIDS agency said Tuesday.

Despite claiming that the trajectory of the epidemic has been "broken," a report released Tuesday by the Geneva-based agency said that there are still 7,000 new infections each day, which means two people are still infected with the virus for every one starting treatment.

Worldwide, the agency said, 33.3 million people are infected with HIV.

In South Africa, which has more people than any other country with the virus that causes AIDS, the agency said new infections have reduced by more than 25 percent in the same time period. AIDS has posed major challenges to the developing nation, affecting an estimated 5.7 million people — a significant chunk of the work force — in the nation of some 50 million people.

Sheila Tlou, an Africa-based UNAIDS official, said that increased condom use, abstinence and improved awareness of AIDS, have contributed to the fall in infections in Africa. However, the report said sub-Saharan

Africa, described by the World Health Organization as the "epicenter of the epidemic," continues to be disproportionately affected by the disease, bearing almost 70 percent of the global HIV burden.

"There is time for optimism, but with a purpose," Tlou told The Associated Press. She said that programming needs to focus on groups that are stigmatized by society and the government.

The report also noted the success of efforts to prevent mother-to-child transmission of the virus, and said it could be virtually eliminated by 2015.

"We can say with confidence and conviction that we have broken the trajectory of the AIDS pandemic. Less people are becoming infected. Less people are dying," UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibe told reporters in Geneva. "At least 56 countries have stabilized or significantly slowed down the rate of HIV infection."

The report also highlighted a worrying increase in infections among young men in North America and Western Europe, which the agency believes is a consequence of fewer precautions. Cases in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Central Asia have almost tripled over the decade.

"The epidemic is far from over in North America and Western Europe," Sidibe said, adding that complacency has played a key role in Western Europe. "We don't see anymore people dying with HIV ... A new generation are losing completely the sense of urgency for protection."

AIDS-related deaths have decreased by nearly 20 percent in the period from 2004 to 2009, as access to treatment has expanded. UNAIDS said 5.2 million people in poor countries were accessing lifesaving anti-retroviral drugs in 2009, compared to just 700,000 in 2004.

However, approximately 10 million people — double the number on treatment — are still waiting to be initiated onto the drugs.

Another factor AIDS experts note is the increasing success of HIV treatments, which add to life expectancy, but also to the cost of treating patients over their lifetime.

Tlou said she hopes the progress described in the report will prompt international donors to increase their funding.

"If people see their money has actually been put to good use, and has produced results, then we'll probably have more replenishment, more countries pledging," Tlou said.

Mark Heywood, deputy chairman of South Africa's National AIDS Council, said there were still more challenges than successes.

"When we have less than 50 percent of people who need treatment on treatment, when we're still failing on prevention, then I don't really think there's anything to crow about at this stage," he said. "We can be optimistic, but the hard work still lies ahead."

The report said one of the greatest strides in prevention of HIV infection has been improved condom use among young people engaging in risky sex.

But some say they know the risks, but still don't take the precautions.

"I think most people, they don't use condoms," said Comment Nxumalo, a 26-year-old mechanic in Johannesburg. "... when you get drunk at times, get a girl there, you end up not using those condoms. Even though at times they'll be in your pocket. But you don't use them."

Associated Press writer Frank Jordans in Geneva contributed to this report.
Copyright © 2010 Associated Press. All rights reserved

Should you not wish to receive this email, please go to the Intranet website <https://intranet.unaids.org/index.php?q=page/1339> and click UNSUBSCRIBE. If you have any questions please contact helpdesk@unaids.org