

PRESS RELEASE

Ethiopia launches national plan to prevent new HIV infections among children

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia, 4 December 2011—The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia HIV and AIDS Prevention and Control Office (FHAPCO) in collaboration with partners released today a National Accelerated Plan for Scaling up Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) Services in Ethiopia.

“With this plan, we are stepping up our efforts to reach many more millions of mothers and babies with PMTCT services in the next four years to ensure an HIV-free generation in our nation,” said Ethiopia’s Minister of Health, Dr Tedros A. Ghebreyesus, who launched the plan at a press conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, together with UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé.

Ethiopia is one of 22 sub-Saharan African countries that succeeded in reducing their national rate of new HIV infections by 25% between 2001 and 2009. According to government estimates, approximately 1.2 million people were living with HIV in Ethiopia in 2010, including about 90 000 pregnant women. Despite progress in the national HIV response, only 9.3% of pregnant women who are eligible for HIV services are currently receiving them.

In June 2011, Ethiopia signed on to the *Global Plan towards the elimination of new HIV infections among children by 2015 and keeping their mothers alive*. As part of this effort, the national plan aims to boost both the rapid expansion and delivery of integrated quality maternal and child health and PMTCT services. The overall aim is to ensure that all pregnant women living with HIV have access to HIV prevention and treatment services, and that new HIV infections among children are eliminated by 2015.

“UNAIDS believes that children everywhere can be born HIV free,” said Mr Sidibé. “Through this new national plan, I am confident that Ethiopia will succeed in eliminating new HIV infections among children and keep their mothers alive.”

The national accelerated emergency plan includes three targeted objectives:

- Reaching 90% of pregnant women with access to antenatal care services
- Ensuring that all pregnant women have access to delivery by a skilled attendant.
- Providing antiretroviral prophylaxis to at least 80% of HIV-positive pregnant women.

“We commend the Government of Ethiopia for its commitment towards the Global Plan for the elimination of new HIV infections among children by 2015 and keeping their mothers alive. PEPFAR has a long history of working hand in hand with the Government of Ethiopia and we continue to support Ethiopia’s commitment to the scale up of PMTCT,” said Ambassador Eric Goosby, the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator.

The plan further identifies the crucial role of male partners in scaling up programmes to stop new HIV infections among children in Ethiopia. The Federal Ministry of Health through FHAPCO, in collaboration with UNAIDS, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and PEPFAR, will

Zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS-related deaths.

implement a national communications campaign aimed at influencing public knowledge, attitudes and opinions around male involvement for the prevention of new HIV infections in children.

As part of this national campaign, a one-minute television public service announcement on male involvement, released today, will be widely aired throughout the country in the four main national languages via various media channels.

Contact

UNAIDS Ethiopia | Rahel Gettu | tel. +251 911 657 834 | gettur@unaids.org

UNAIDS Geneva | Saira Stewart | tel. +41 79 467 2013 | stewarts@unaids.org

UNAIDS

UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, is an innovative United Nations partnership that leads and inspires the world in achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Learn more at unaids.org.