

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Bénin launches national plan to prevent new HIV infections among children**

**GENEVA, 20 February 2012**—The Government of the Republic of Bénin, in collaboration with UNAIDS, UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA and partners, today launched a national plan aimed at eliminating new HIV infections among children and improving the health of their mothers.

“This plan will contribute to satisfying the quality requirements for the care of pregnant women living with HIV, their children and their families,” said Bénin’s Minister of Health, Prof. Dorothee Kindé-Gazard, speaking today at an official ceremony in Cotonou hosted by the President of Bénin, Dr Thomas Yayi Boni. “It will make it possible to harmonize services that prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV throughout the country and to better coordinate the interventions.”

According to government estimates, approximately 62 000 people are living with HIV in Bénin. Between 2004 and 2011, the number of health facilities offering services that prevent new HIV infections in children expanded from 204 to 450. Despite progress, only about half (49%) of pregnant women eligible for HIV services are currently receiving them.

In June 2011, Bénin 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 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.

“I applaud the vision, commitment and will of Bénin’s political leadership—in particular the Minister of Health—to ensure that in the coming years, we will see that no child in Bénin is born with HIV and that all mothers remain healthy and alive,” said UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé, who also attended today’s ceremony.

The expected impact of the plan for the period 2012 to 2015:

1. A 90% reduction in the number of new HIV infections among children.
2. A 90% reduction in the number of AIDS-related deaths among children.
3. A 50% reduction in the number of AIDS-related deaths among mothers in the 12-month post-partum period.

A number of strategies will be employed to reach these goals, such as: ensuring access to comprehensive services that prevent new HIV infections among children at all maternity hospitals across the country; ensuring access to treatment for all pregnant women who are eligible for antiretroviral therapy; expanding access to voluntary HIV testing and counselling; strengthening access to male and female condoms, especially among young people; and public advocacy campaigns.

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[Zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS-related deaths.](#)

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