

PRESS STATEMENT

UNAIDS calls for an integrated approach to HIV and TB services

GENEVA, 2 March 2012—An estimated one in four AIDS-related deaths each year is caused by tuberculosis (TB). A majority of these deaths occur in Africa, where the mortality rate from HIV-related TB is more than 20 times higher than in other world regions. Reducing the dual burden of these twin epidemics will require the scale-up of collaborative TB-HIV activities.

UNAIDS welcomes the updated HIV-TB policy guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO), released today. This revised guidance is timely as countries work towards a 50% reduction in TB deaths among people living with HIV by the year 2015—a key target enshrined in the 2011 United Nations Political Declaration on AIDS.

“People living with HIV are more likely to develop TB and need integrated health services,” said UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé. “Integration is not just an ideal, but a necessity.”

In recent years, countries have made considerable progress in addressing TB and HIV. Between 2005 and 2010, the number of people living with HIV screened for TB increased 12-fold, from nearly 200 000 to 2.3 million. In 2010, more than 60% of HIV-positive people who developed active TB were identified and treated for TB. An estimated 910 000 lives were saved between 2005 and 2010 as a result of the scale-up and implementation of collaborative HIV-TB activities.

The new WHO guidelines include recommended actions to further reduce the dual HIV-TB burden. The main elements of WHO’s new policy include:

- Routine HIV testing for TB patients, people with symptoms of TB, and their partners or family members;
- Provision of co-trimoxazole, a cost-effective medicine to prevent against lung or other infections for all TB patients who are infected with HIV;
- Starting all TB patients with HIV on antiretroviral therapy as soon as possible, regardless of immune system measurements;
- Evidence-based methods to prevent the acquisition of HIV for TB patients, their families and communities.

Contact

UNAIDS Geneva | Saira Stewart | tel. +41 22 791 2511 | 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.

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