

PRESS RELEASE

HIV treatment now reaching more than 6 million people in sub-Saharan Africa

More than 100-fold increase in access to HIV treatment in less than a decade. African Union to review roadmap to increase access to medicines and ensure sustainable financing.

GENEVA, 6 July 2012—For the second year in a row, an additional 1.1 million people in sub-Saharan Africa received antiretroviral therapy, reaching a total of 6.2 million people across the region in 2011. In less than a decade, access to HIV treatment in sub-Saharan Africa has increased more than 100-fold.

“I am impressed with the progress that Africa has achieved on AIDS, but much remains to be done,” said Dr Thomas Yayi Boni, Chairperson of African Union and President of Benin. “As chairperson of the African Union, I am working closely with African leaders and partners to deliver more sustainable and African owned responses.”

By the end of 2011, an estimated 56% of people eligible for treatment in sub-Saharan Africa were accessing it. There was a 19% increase in treatment coverage across the region between 2010 and 2011 alone.

“Ten years ago, we could never have imagined reaching so many people in Africa with antiretroviral therapy,” said UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé. “Even in uncertain economic times, African leaders have shown leadership by increasing domestic HIV investments and expanding treatment access for people living with HIV.”

According to preliminary estimates from country reports, the most dramatic progress has been seen in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya. In 2011, at least 300 000 people in South Africa were newly enrolled in treatment; 100 000 in Kenya; and 150 000 in Zimbabwe. Many other countries, including Botswana, Namibia and Swaziland have already achieved high levels of treatment coverage.

Expanded treatment access in sub-Saharan Africa is due, in part, to a major drop in the cost of HIV treatment regimens. In 2000, the cost of a year’s supply of first-line HIV treatment was about US \$10 000 per person; today, it is less than \$100 per person.

Treatment on the agenda at AU Summit

Access to medicines will be among the key themes addressed at the 19th African Union (AU) Summit on 15-16 July. Heads of State and Government attending the Summit will discuss a new roadmap to accelerate AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria responses by 2015.

The roadmap addresses, among other issues, the continent’s dependency on external sources for life-saving medicines. Currently, more than 80% of HIV drugs dispensed in Africa are imported. A vast majority of HIV medicines keeping Africans alive are paid for through external financial aid.

“Africa’s dependency on external aid is destabilizing the HIV response,” said the UNAIDS Executive Director. “Leaders across the African continent are poised to transcend the outdated donor-recipient paradigm and embrace a new compact for shared responsibility and global solidarity.”

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UNAIDS

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) leads and inspires the world to achieve its shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. UNAIDS unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank—and works closely with global and national partners to maximize results for the AIDS response. Learn more at unaids.org and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.