

PRESS STATEMENT

No time to lose in the search for an HIV vaccine

GENEVA, 18 May 2013—The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) joins partners and allies around the world in recognizing World AIDS Vaccine Day.

Developing an HIV vaccine is one of the greatest scientific challenges the world faces—and one of the most important. While encouraging progress has been made in the AIDS response, getting to zero new HIV infections will ultimately require a safe and highly effective HIV vaccine.

The recent news that a potential vaccine candidate was found ineffective in a large clinical trial highlights the magnitude of the task. However, evidence shows that a vaccine is possible. One candidate has already been shown to be partially effective (the RV144 trial, reported in 2009), and a multinational research collaboration is investigating ways to improve upon it. In the laboratory, exciting new discoveries may soon lead to the development of entirely different types of vaccines.

“Despite the formidable challenge of finding a vaccine for a complex virus like HIV, there is today a more systematic and concerted scientific effort than ever before,” said Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS. “Sustained funding for research to find a vaccine for HIV is essential. With almost five new infections every minute, there is no time to lose.”

While the scientific challenges are great, they are being overcome due to the commitment and hard work of researchers, study participants, and affected communities. An effective HIV vaccine is only possible with continued support and investment in this critical work.

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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.