

PRESS RELEASE

New HIV infections among children have been reduced by 50% or more in seven countries in sub-Saharan Africa

New report also shows that access to treatment remains unacceptably low for children—only 3 in 10 children in need of treatment have access in most of the 'Global Plan' priority countries

GENEVA, 25 June 2013—A new report on the *Global Plan towards elimination of new HIV infections among children by 2015 and keeping their mothers alive* (Global Plan) has revealed a marked increase in progress in stopping new infections among children across the Global Plan priority countries in Africa.

The report outlines that seven countries in sub-Saharan Africa—Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia—have reduced new HIV infections among children by 50% since 2009. Two others—the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe—are also making substantial progress. It highlights that there were 130 000 fewer new HIV infections among children across the 21 Global Plan priority countries in Africa—a drop of 38% since 2009.

“The progress in the majority of countries is a strong signal that with focused efforts every child can be born free from HIV,” said Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). “But progress has stalled in some countries with high numbers of new HIV infections. We need to find out why and remove the bottlenecks which are preventing scale-up.”

With a 76% decline since 2009, Ghana showed the greatest decline in the rate of new infections among children and South Africa showed a 63% decline (24 000 fewer new HIV infections in 2012 than in 2009). However, the pace of decline in some of the Global Plan priority countries has been slow and in Angola, new HIV infections have even increased. New infections among children in Nigeria—which has the largest number of children acquiring HIV (nearly 60 000 new HIV infections among children in 2012)—remained largely unchanged since 2009. Without urgent action in Nigeria the global target for 2015 may not be reached.

More pregnant women living with HIV were receiving antiretroviral medicines to prevent HIV from being transmitted to their children and for their own health in 2012 than in 2009, with coverage levels exceeding 75% in many countries. Increased coverage has reduced HIV transmission rates from mother to child in most countries. Botswana and South Africa have reduced transmission rates to 5% or below.

“We have the tools required to reach the Global Plan’s goals, and recent data show that we are moving ever closer to their realization,” said Ambassador Eric P. Goosby, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator. “This month, as U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry announced, the one millionth baby will be born HIV-free due to PEPFAR’s support. Now, we must all continue working together to see the day when no children are born with HIV, which is within our reach,” he added.

The report however also reveals that only half of all breastfeeding women living with HIV or their children receive antiretroviral medicines to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV. It outlines that breastfeeding is critical to ensuring child survival and strongly emphasizes the urgent need to provide antiretroviral therapy during the breastfeeding period.

More than half of the children eligible for treatment in South Africa and Swaziland now have access. Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe have doubled the numbers of children accessing treatment from 2009 to 2012. While the report outlines that the number of children requiring HIV treatment will reduce as new HIV infections decline, urgent steps need to be taken to improve early diagnosis of HIV in children and ensure timely access to antiretroviral treatment.

The number of pregnant women living with HIV receiving antiretroviral therapy for their own health has increased since 2009. In Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia, more than 75% of the pregnant women eligible receive antiretroviral therapy and more than 50% in Kenya, Lesotho, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Increasing access to antiretroviral therapy for pregnant women living with HIV for their own health is critical.

The *Global Plan towards elimination of new HIV infections among children by 2015 and keeping their mothers alive* is an initiative spearheaded by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) which was unveiled in June 2011 at the UN General Assembly High Level Meeting on AIDS. It has two main targets for 2015: a 90% reduction in the number of children newly infected with HIV and a 50% reduction in the number of AIDS-related maternal deaths. The Plan focuses on the 22* countries which account for 90% of new HIV infections among children.

This second progress report presents the progress made by the 21 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and some of the challenges they face in meeting the agreed targets for 2015.

http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/unaidspublication/2013/20130625_progress_global_plan_en.pdf

* *Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.*

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PEPFAR

The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is the U.S. Government initiative to help save the lives of those suffering from HIV/AIDS around the world. This historic commitment is the largest by any nation to combat a single disease internationally, and PEPFAR investments also help alleviate suffering from other diseases across the global health spectrum. PEPFAR is driven by a shared responsibility among donor and partner nations and others to make smart investments to save lives. Learn more at www.pepfar.gov.

UNICEF

UNICEF works in more than 190 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments. For more information about UNICEF and its work visit www.unicef.org Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

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.