

PRESS STATEMENT**New formulation of HIV treatment to save more children's lives --
UNICEF and UNAIDS**

Tiny pellets make antiretroviral medicines more palatable for children

NEW YORK/GENEVA, 5 June 2015—Children affected by HIV and AIDS will benefit from the decision by the United States Food and Drug Administration to grant approval to a new antiretroviral formulation that can be mixed with food to make it easier for children living with HIV to take the life-saving medicines, UNAIDS and UNICEF said today.

“Treatment innovations such as this that replace unpleasant and bad tasting medicines are a real breakthrough, accelerating access to treatment for children and keeping our youngest healthy,” said Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS. “It is unacceptable that only 24% of children living with HIV have access to antiretroviral medicines.”

The oral pellets, manufactured by Indian generic medicines manufacturer CIPLA, contain an antiretroviral formulation of lopinavir and ritonavir that can be mixed into a child's food. The treatment is heat stable and more palatable than medicines currently available, making it particularly suitable for treating very young children.

“This new formulation is a step in the right direction towards saving more lives of children living with HIV,” said Craig McClure, UNICEF's Chief of HIV and AIDS and Associate Director, Programmes. “We expect it to greatly improve treatment access for many more children and support UNICEF's equity focused programming aimed at reaching the most disadvantaged children throughout the world.”

HIV infection progresses rapidly in children and, in highly impacted countries, is a major contributor to child morbidity and mortality. Without treatment, one in three children who become infected with HIV will die before their first birthday. Half will die before their second birthday.

Early initiation of antiretroviral treatment in children as recommended by the World Health Organization substantially reduces the risk of death. Many countries have not been able to fully implement the WHO recommendation because of the challenge of not having a more appropriate, heat stable and palatable paediatric formulation of lopinavir/ritonavir used as part of the treatment options for children under 3 years of age.

Despite global efforts to accelerate access to HIV paediatric care and treatment, fewer than 800 000 of the 3.2 million children living with HIV worldwide had access to antiretroviral medicines in 2013.

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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 towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030. Learn more at unaids.org and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.

UNICEF

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere. For more information about UNICEF and its work, visit: www.unicef.org.