

PRESS STATEMENT

UNAIDS welcomes the appointment of Ghada Fathi Waly as Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

GENEVA, 25 November 2019—UNAIDS warmly welcomes the appointment of Ghada Fathi Waly as the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna.

“I look forward to working closely with Ms Waly to help build safer societies for all where everyone has unimpeded access to the right to health, education and justice,” said Winnie Byanyima, UNAIDS Executive Director. “UNAIDS will also continue to partner the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in advancing innovative harm reduction programmes and policies for people who use drugs that aim to reduce the damaging effects of drug use on individuals and societies, while respecting the rights of people who use drugs and prisoners.”

HIV infections among people who inject drugs are rising. Outside of sub-Saharan Africa in 2018, people who inject drugs and their sexual partners accounted for around one fifth of all people newly infected with HIV. In two regions of the world—eastern Europe and central Asia and the Middle East and North Africa—people who inject drugs accounted for more than one third of new infections in 2018. Viral hepatitis and tuberculosis rates among people who use drugs are also high in many parts of the world. These preventable and treatable diseases, combined with overdose deaths, which are also preventable, are claiming hundreds of thousands of lives each year.

Comprehensive harm reduction services—including needle–syringe programmes, opioid substitution therapy, drug dependence treatment, overdose prevention and testing and treatment for HIV, tuberculosis and hepatitis B and C—reduce the incidence of blood-borne infections, overdose deaths and other harms.

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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 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Learn more at unaids.org and connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.