

PRESS RELEASE

Sri Lanka eliminates vertical transmission of HIV and syphilis

GENEVA/BANGKOK, 13 December 2019—UNAIDS congratulates Sri Lanka for achieving the elimination of vertical transmission of HIV and congenital syphilis. “Sri Lanka’s remarkable achievement gives me hope and shows that change is possible. It is clear that when a country ensures that services are accessible and stigma-free for women, including for women living with or affected by HIV, results follow that benefit women’s health, their children’s health and society as a whole,” said Winnie Byanyima, UNAIDS Executive Director.

According to the Ministry of Public Health of Sri Lanka, in 2018 all pregnant women diagnosed with HIV started antiretroviral therapy and 97% of pregnant women diagnosed with syphilis received treatment. The country has not reported any case of mother-to-child transmission of HIV since 2017 and the rate of congenital syphilis has been reduced to less than 50 cases per 100 000 live births in 2017 and 2018.

“The elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV is the result of strong political commitment, a successful multisectoral integrated approach built upon the foundations of the public health system and technical expertise,” said Anil Jasinghe, Director General of Health Services in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka becomes the fourth country in the Asia–Pacific region after Thailand, Malaysia and the Maldives to be validated for eliminating vertical transmission of HIV and congenital syphilis.

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