

WORLD AIDS DAY STATEMENT

## Princess Tessy of Luxembourg

UNAIDS Global Advocate for Young Women and Adolescent Girls

**1 December 2015**

So much progress has been made in the AIDS response since the peak of the epidemic. AIDS-related deaths have fallen dramatically as more than 15 million people gain access to life-saving antiretroviral medicines, and new HIV infections have decreased by more than a third since 2000.

But we must not become complacent.

This World AIDS Day, my thoughts are with people who might otherwise be left behind in the AIDS response. Everyone must have the power to protect themselves from HIV and to ensure treatment reaches everyone living with HIV.

My message is especially for young women and adolescent girls. Worldwide, AIDS-related illnesses are still the primary cause of death among women of reproductive age and, in 2014, 62% of new HIV infections among 15–19-year-olds were among young women and girls.

We can change this. We can make sure that schools everywhere offer comprehensive sexuality education that empowers young women and girls, enabling them to make healthier choices and challenge gender norms and discrimination.

We can work with young women and adolescent girls to ensure that knowing your HIV status and access to essential services are part of quality sexual and reproductive care. We can remove age- and gender-related barriers to guarantee age-appropriate, easily accessible health services. And we can support community-led programmes to address gender-based violence and end harmful practices.

We can put young women and girls on the Fast-Track to ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030. The UNAIDS Fast-Track Strategy is clear: from now on, no one must be left behind in the AIDS response.

Let's make a commitment this World AIDS Day. Let's end the AIDS epidemic for everyone by 2030.

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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](http://unaids.org) and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.