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First Lady of Côte d'Ivoire

## DOMINIQUE OUATTARA

UNAIDS SPECIAL AMBASSADOR FOR THE ELIMINATION OF  
MOTHER-TO-CHILD TRANSMISSION AND THE PROMOTION  
OF PAEDIATRIC TREATMENT FOR HIV

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*“This important role is a catalyst for my commitment to the AIDS response and to zero discrimination. Every pregnant woman living with HIV needs access to antiretroviral medicines to help to ensure that her child can be born free from HIV. All people, especially children, living with HIV deserve the best medicines possible. I believe that together we can transform the world and I will remain committed to this dream until we reach an AIDS-free generation.”*

DOMINIQUE OUATTARA  
FIRST LADY OF CÔTE D’IVOIRE





## A FIRST LADY OF ACTION

Putting children and families first has been a long-term commitment of Dominique Ouattara, the First Lady of Côte d'Ivoire and the Founding President of the Children of Africa Foundation. Through her multiple platforms, the First Lady has championed the rights of children for access to health and education. In 1998, Madame Ouattara created the Children of Africa Foundation, which has supported several projects in Côte d'Ivoire, including the construction of a school and immunization campaigns.

In 2011, she was named President of the National Monitoring Committee on Actions to Fight Trafficking, Exploitation and Child Labor. She launched the Support Fund for the Women of Côte d'Ivoire in 2012 to finance women-led micro-projects. This fund aims to facilitate financial empowerment and encourage entrepreneurship among women.

In her role as Special Ambassador for the Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission and the Promotion of Paediatric Treatment for HIV, Ms Ouattara will continue to build awareness of the need for women and children living with HIV to access antiretroviral therapy and to help to ensure that children are born free from HIV.

In 2016, the First Lady launched the Dominique Ouattara Excellence Award for the Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV. The award aims to highlight the work of different actors (health districts, nongovernmental organizations and community advisers) in the field of health and HIV in Côte d'Ivoire. Shortly after launching the award, she co-convoked with UNAIDS an international meeting focused on advancing paediatric HIV treatment.

Recognizing that many barriers to health and education involve stigma and discrimination, Ms Ouattara is a strong advocate for zero discrimination.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Dominique Ouattara started her career as a businesswoman in a company that specialized in real estate in Côte d'Ivoire. In 1979, she founded the real estate group AICI International, which grew to include offices in Paris and Cannes, Libreville and Ouagadougou. She gave up her commitment to her companies when she became First Lady.

## Q&A WITH THE FIRST LADY OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE

*What keeps you motivated in your work with children and families?*

Sometimes when you are faced with the needs of a population, a single person's action can seem like a drop in the ocean. But then, when I see the smile on a child's face, I realize that every little gesture of love can make a miracle and change the life of a child in a difficult situation. And so I want to continue to try to make miracles and encourage more people to join me in making a difference.

*What would you like people to know about young people and the AIDS response?*

When it comes to working to end the AIDS epidemic, we know that we are not doing enough for adolescent girls and young women. We know that the number of new HIV infections is increasing among adolescents and young people, while it is declining in other age groups. To change this trajectory, we have to ensure that adolescents have better access to information, education and sexual health services.

*What is your goal as a UNAIDS Special Ambassador?*

With UNAIDS as my partner I will focus my efforts to convene, recognize and encourage the actions needed for all children living with HIV to have access to quality medicines that are effective and child-friendly. I will champion zero discrimination and an AIDS-free generation in Côte d'Ivoire, Africa and the world.

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### 76%

Percentage of pregnant women living with HIV who had access to antiretroviral medicines to prevent transmission of HIV to their babies in 2016.

### 66%

Decline of new HIV infections among children between 2000 and 2016.

### 43%

Percentage of all children living with HIV who were accessing treatment in 2016.



## AN AIDS-FREE GENERATION IN AFRICA AND BEYOND

The high coverage of pregnant women receiving antiretroviral therapy to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV has helped to reduce the number of new HIV infections among children. However, the scale up and integration of prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV services with other health and maternal care services in order to reach the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach women are critical factors for ensuring that babies are born free from HIV and their mothers stay healthy.

There were an estimated 160 000 new HIV infections among children in the countries of the *Global Plan towards the elimination of new HIV infections among children by 2015 and keeping their mothers alive*<sup>1</sup> in 2016. This is a 53% reduction since 2009, when there was an estimated 330 000 new infections among children.

Today, it is known that eliminating new HIV infections among children is feasible, and there is consensus that this goal should be an urgent worldwide undertaking. Concerted financial, political and societal commitment is needed to realize the goal of an AIDS-free generation.

Since 2013, the World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended that all pregnant women diagnosed with HIV and all children younger than five years old living with HIV should have access to good-quality HIV prevention and treatment services.

Worldwide, 76% of pregnant women living with HIV had access to antiretroviral medicines to prevent transmission of HIV to their babies in 2016.

In Côte d'Ivoire, more than 73% of pregnant women living with HIV have access to antiretroviral therapy, up from 26% in 2010.

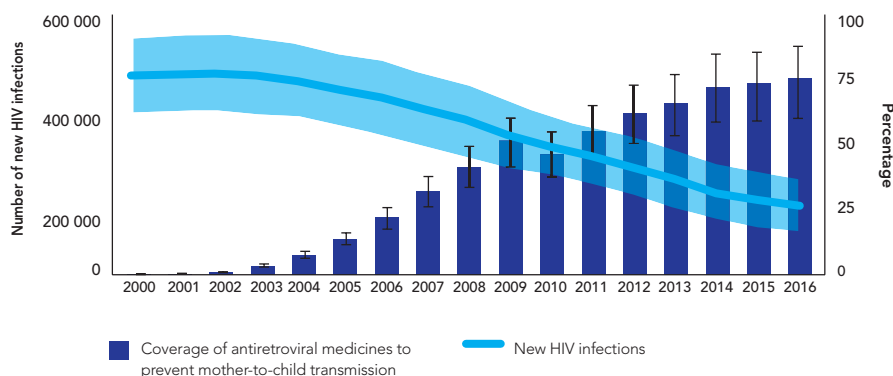


## ALL CHILDREN WITH ACCESS TO CHILD-FRIENDLY HIV TREATMENT

The percentage of all children living with HIV who were accessing treatment increased from 11% in 2010 to 25% in 2016, but more needs to be done to ensure they have access to HIV services.

New HIV infections among children were reduced by 66% from 2000 to 2016. Worldwide, 160 000 children became newly infected with HIV in 2016, down from 460 000 in 2000.

*New HIV infections among children (aged 0–14 years) and coverage of Antiretroviral Regimens to prevent mother-to-child transmission, global, 2000–2016*



Source: UNAIDS 2017 estimates.



## DID YOU KNOW?

The butterfly, which represents transformation, is the symbol for Zero Discrimination Day, celebrated on 1 March of each year.

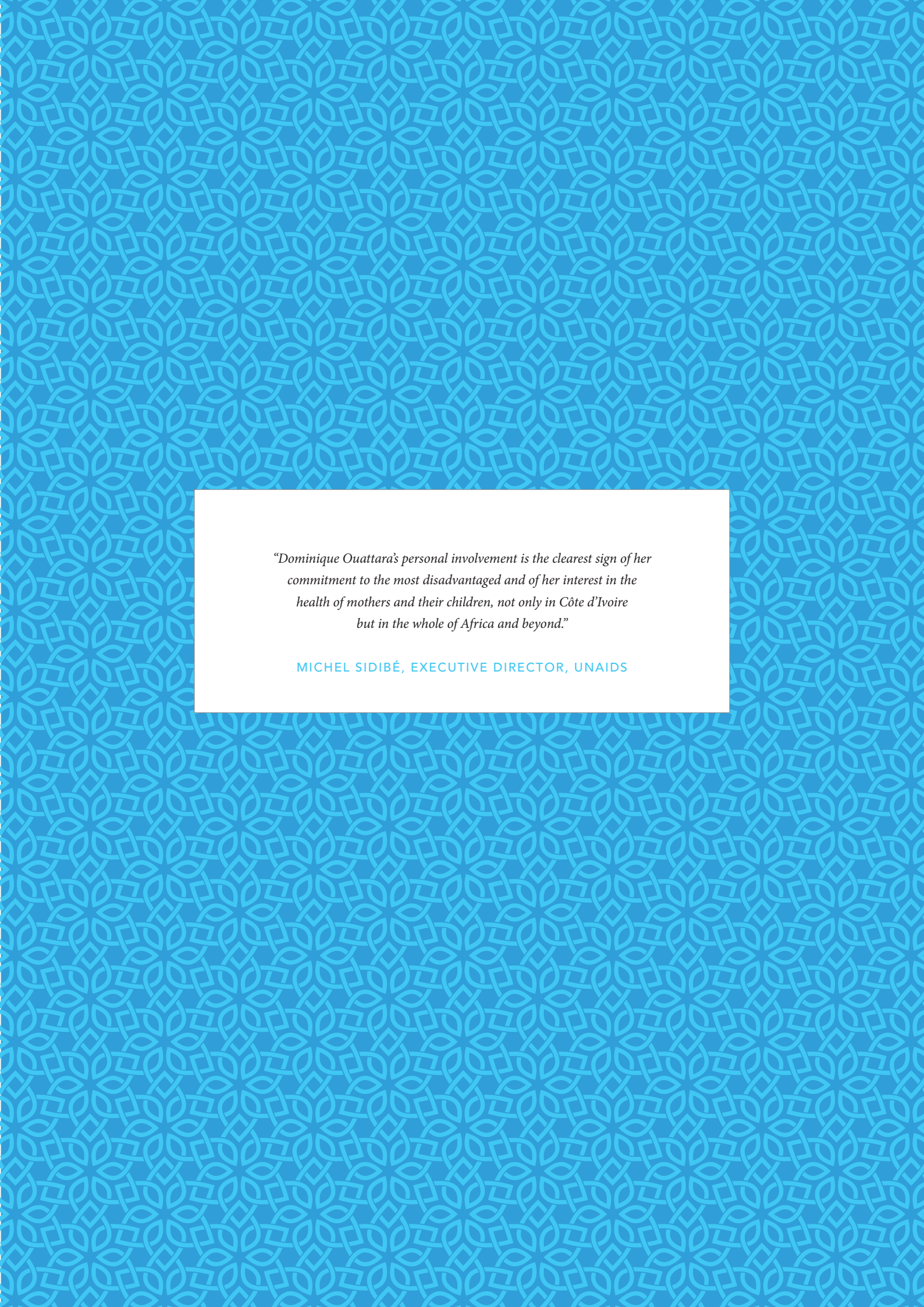
## ZERO DISCRIMINATION

All people have the right to live with dignity.

On 1 March 2013, UNAIDS launched Zero Discrimination Day, to bring awareness and action to break down the barriers that keep people from living with dignity. Stigma and discrimination keeps people from accessing essential services, such as education and health.

Thirty-five years after the start of the AIDS epidemic, discrimination against people living with HIV and other key populations is still a reality. Stigma and discrimination affects millions of people around the world, reducing their capacity to participate fully and significantly in society, be it at work, at school or in their communities.

UNAIDS sponsors the global zero discrimination campaign, which supports the Sustainable Development Goals, including the target of ending the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030. Gender, nationality, age, disability, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, language or any other status should never be a reason to discriminate; however, stigma and discrimination continues to be widespread. Discrimination is one of the barriers that people face in accessing HIV prevention and treatment services. Removing obstacles can have a positive impact on health outcomes.



*“Dominique Ouattara’s personal involvement is the clearest sign of her commitment to the most disadvantaged and of her interest in the health of mothers and their children, not only in Côte d’Ivoire but in the whole of Africa and beyond.”*

MICHEL SIDIBÉ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNAIDS



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