



REMARKS

WINNIE BYANYIMA,
UNAIDS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
COMMUNITIES OF FAITH BREAKFAST: BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR A ONE-COMMUNITY
RESPONSE TO HIV. PRIORITIZING CHILDREN IN THE HIV RESPONSE





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WINNIE BYANYIMA,
UNAIDS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
THURSDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2023

Thank you Rev. Dionne wonderful to have you with us again.

Good morning all.

I would like to thank our friends at PEPFAR and at the World Council of Churches for organizing this prayer breakfast jointly with UNAIDS again this year. It has become a wonderful tradition of the UNAIDS-PEPFAR Faith Initiative.

I am honoured to welcome Your Grace Archbishop Thabo Makoba. Thank you for joining us today. Welcome my brother and friend Ambassador Dr John Nkengasong; all religious leaders present (from a variety of faith traditions); all participants.

We are focusing our discussions this morning on the need to prioritise children in the HIV response. Overall, there has been a 58% reduction in global new HIV infections among children from 2010 to 2022 to around 130 000 which is the lowest number since the 1980s. This is good news and we should celebrate. But every single one of these new HIV infections is preventable. Why over 40 years into the AIDS response are we not reaching every mother and every baby with the HIV services they need?

Let me share some more numbers:

- 660 000 children living with HIV—about 43% of the 1.5 million children living with HIV—were not receiving treatment in 2022.
- And only half of the children living with HIV and on treatment are virally suppressed.
- AIDS-related deaths in children were reduced by 64% in 2010–2022, yet AIDS still claimed the lives of approximately 84 000 children in 2022.

These numbers are a stark reminder indeed that we are failing our children. They are being left behind in our response. Also, a terrible indictment of ourselves—that those who can't speak for themselves can't get what they need.

UNAIDS is deeply committed to ensuring the well-being of children affected by and living with HIV. Together with our Cosponsors, UNICEF and WHO, the Global Alliance to End AIDS in Children launched earlier



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this year brings together governments, civil society, including faith organizations and partners. We are working hard to make sure no child is left behind.

This Alliance has brought together countries with the highest burden of HIV in children at the highest political level as well as multistakeholder partners including funders- PEPFAR and Global Fund.

I would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to my brother Ambassador Nkengasong and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). All of us in this room know just how instrumental PEPFAR has been the global response to HIV.

More than 25 million people living with HIV are alive today and more than 5.5 million babies were born HIV-free thanks to PEPFAR.

Faith-based organizations and communities play a pivotal role in providing care, support, and education, reaching those who can't be reached by government. Their values of compassion, solidarity, and community engagement align perfectly with the mission of the UN. The faith community was among the first responders to the AIDS pandemic and continues to be critical for our progress, for reaching children and their families.

The Compendium of Promising Practices of African Faith Community Interventions Against Paediatric and Adolescents HIV, which the UNAIDS-PEPFAR Faith Initiative launched last June is a comprehensive guide that can help us in our shared mission to prioritize children in the HIV response. I encourage each one of you to not only utilize this resource but also disseminate it widely to your networks and communities.

In conclusion, I want to thank you all for your dedication, your expertise, and your unwavering support to this vital cause.

Let's continue with determination, compassion, solidarity and collaboration until no child is newly infected with HIV and no child living with HIV is without lifesaving treatment.

Thank you.



