

## WORLD AIDS DAY MESSAGE 2013

**1 December 2013**

**Michel Sidibé**

**Executive Director of UNAIDS**

**Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations**

On this World AIDS Day—as we gather to remember friends and family lost to AIDS—we can also rejoice in incredible hope for the future.

For the first time we can see an end to an epidemic that has wrought such staggering devastation around the world. For the first time we can say that we are beginning to control the epidemic and not that the epidemic is controlling us.

Few thought that we could achieve the progress which we are seeing today. Progress is clear in the scientific breakthroughs, visionary leadership and precision programming. The combination of these powerful factors means that people living with HIV can live long and healthy lives, can now protect their partners from becoming infected with the virus, and can keep their children free from HIV.

Determining what the end of AIDS could look like is complex. To help answer these questions UNAIDS, together with The Lancet have set up a Commission to find answers to what ending AIDS will look like.

It is certain that ending the AIDS epidemic will mean so much to so many. It will mean zero new HIV infections, zero people dying of AIDS—and all people living with dignity and without fear of discrimination. Ending AIDS will mean celebrating birthdays instead of attending funerals.

But make no mistake, stigma, denial and complacency are still among us, putting us in danger of failing the next generation. We must join our hearts and our voices—together we are stronger.

The world is poised to end AIDS and if we stay true to our vision we will remember this as the day that a lifelong of dreams began to transform into reality.

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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 to maximize results for the AIDS response. Learn more at [unaids.org](http://unaids.org) and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.