

Fact sheet

Source: 2007 AIDS epidemic update—regional summary

Sub-Saharan Africa

Regional overview

- Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region most affected by the AIDS epidemic, with more than two thirds (68%) of all people infected with HIV living there.
- Women are disproportionately affected, representing 61% of people living with HIV in the region.
- In most of sub-Saharan Africa, national HIV prevalence has either stabilized or is showing signs of a decline. **Côte d'Ivoire**, **Kenya** and **Zimbabwe** have all seen drops in national prevalence, continuing earlier trends.
- Data on sexual behaviour trends among young people in some countries (**Cameroon**, **Kenya**, **Zimbabwe**, **Malawi**, **Rwanda**, **Togo**, **United Republic of Tanzania** and **Zambia**) are encouraging, and suggest HIV prevention efforts are having an impact.
- An estimated 50% to 80% of tuberculosis patients in **Southern Africa** are also HIV positive, underlining the urgency to address HIV/TB co-infection in the region.

Country data and trends

- In 2007, **Southern Africa** accounted for almost a third (32%) of all new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths globally.
- Several studies reveal **Zimbabwe's** epidemic has declined in recent years, with a significant drop in HIV prevalence in pregnant women, from 26% in 2002 to 18% in 2006. Among young pregnant women (15–24 years), prevalence fell from 21% to 14% over the same period. These figures mirror the most recent population-based HIV survey (2005-2006) that estimated national adult (15–49 years) HIV prevalence at 18%. The decline in HIV incidence is being partially linked to reports of safer sexual behaviour, with evidence of more people avoiding sex with non-regular partners and of decreasing numbers of adult men paying for sex.
- With some 5.5 million people living with HIV, **South Africa** is the country with the largest number of infections in the world. Reflecting similar trends from other countries in the region, young women in South Africa face greater risks of becoming infected than men: among 15–24-year-olds, they account for around 90% of new HIV infections.
- **Swaziland's** national adult HIV prevalence of 26% is the highest in the world.
- A decrease in HIV infection levels among pregnant women in **Botswana** in recent years, from 36% in 2001 to 32% in 2006, suggests the epidemic has possibly reached its peak and could be on the decline.
- The latest data coming from **Angola** indicate that HIV prevalence among pregnant women was similar in 2004 and 2005, pointing to a possible stabilization of the epidemic.

- In most of East Africa, adult HIV prevalence is either stable or declining slightly. The latter trend is most evident in **Kenya**, which is experiencing a slow but steady decline in HIV infections amid evidence of changing behaviour, especially among young unmarried adults.
- Mixed data from **Uganda** point to an urgent need to revive and adapt the type of prevention efforts that helped bring the country's epidemic under control in the 1990s. Despite an overall levelling trend of HIV prevalence, the country's growing population, combined with evidence of HIV infection increases in some areas, could point to a re-emergence of the epidemic; with a fertility rate near 7%, a stable HIV incidence rate means that an increasing number of people acquire HIV each year.
- Among the recent improvements in **Rwanda's** HIV response is the expansion of services for preventing HIV transmission from mothers to children, which are now available in more than half of the country's health facilities.
- The epidemics in West Africa are generally stable, with the exception of **Burkina Faso** (urban areas only), **Côte d'Ivoire**, and **Mali**, where HIV prevalence is declining.
- In both **Burkina Faso** and **Côte d'Ivoire**, there is evidence of a shift towards behaviours that can limit the spread of HIV. Condom use during sex with a non-regular partner increased substantially for women—from 39% to 53% between 1998–1999 and 2003 in the former, and from 21% to 34% between 1998 and 2005 in the latter.
- Studies from **Benin** show that women and men who had sex with a non-regular partner were more likely to use condoms when doing so. Condom use in higher risk sex rose from 9% to 25% for women and from 22% to 40% for men between 1996 and 2006.
- Adult national HIV prevalence in the **Central African Republic** is among the highest in all of West and Central Africa, estimated at 6.2% in a 2006 national survey.

Contact:

Sophie Barton-Knott | UNAIDS Geneva | tel. +41 22 791 1697 | bartonknotts@unaids.org