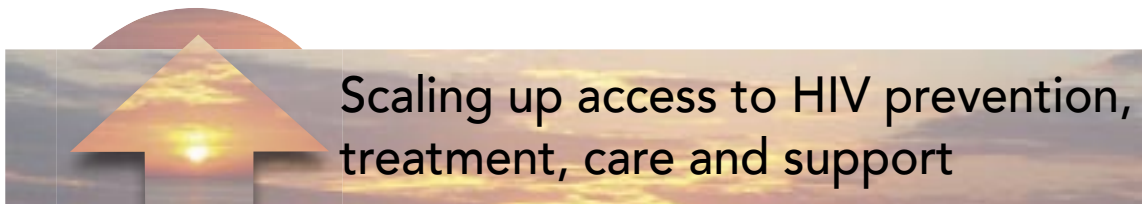


The road towards universal access



Scaling up access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support

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The United Nations working together on the road towards universal access.

In a letter dated 12 December 2005, the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, refers to a recent call made by the Heads of State and Government "for greater cohesion and effectiveness in (the UN) response to AIDS at the country level".

This call was made when the 2005 World Summit endorsed the Global Task Team recommendations on Improving AIDS Coordination among multilateral institutions.

While the Global Task Team recognized national ownership of plans as an overarching rubric, it has developed a set of recommendations on how countries and multilateral institutions and international partners can strengthen, streamline and better organize



their responses to the epidemic. These recommendations fall under four main headings:

1. Empowering inclusive national leadership and ownership
2. Alignment and harmonization
3. Reform for a more effective multilateral response
4. Accountability and oversight

The road towards universal access:

- More than 45 countries have held consultations including representatives from non governmental organizations, faith based organizations, groups of people living with HIV and the private sector to identify the specific obstacles to scaling up the HIV and AIDS response and the actions to overcome them.
- More than 100 countries have received support from UNAIDS to initiate broadly inclusive national consultations.
- 3 regional consultations (Latin America, Caribbean, Asia Pacific) have examined and consolidated the outcomes of the national consultations. 4 regional consultations in Africa, South Central Europe and the Middle East are planned within the next few weeks.
- A broadly representative Global Steering Committee, co-chaired by Michel Sidibe from UNAIDS, and Masood Ahmed from DFID, with strong civil society participation, is meeting three times between January and March to articulate the findings of the national and regional processes.
- UNAIDS Secretariat will present an assessment of these processes, including an analysis of obstacles to the United Nations General Assembly in May-June 2006.

In line with the GTT recommendations, the United Nations General Assembly resolution adopted on 23 December 2005 requests UNAIDS Secretariat and its Cosponsors to assist in facilitating inclusive, country driven processes for scaling up HIV prevention, treatment, care and support with the aim of coming as close as possible to the goal of universal access to treatment by 2010.

Responding to these calls, UNAIDS Cosponsors are collaborating to effectively support the national efforts to combat AIDS.

The following short sections map out each of the Cosponsors contributions and areas of responsibilities.



Reaching out to refugees, conflict affected and displaced populations

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will actively advocate for and support moving towards universal access to HIV prevention services and commodities and antiretroviral therapy (ART) for refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR. UNHCR will follow the principles outlined in UNHCR's ART policy and refugee health policies. It will advocate for an integrated and equitable distribution of prevention and ART that includes conflict-affected and displaced populations as well as their surrounding host populations. Since refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR are often situated in marginalized and remote areas, UNHCR's extensive human resources and logistical system can be used to deliver prevention and

ART to these isolated areas. UNHCR promotes a sub-regional approach to ensure continuity of prevention and ART to those refugees who repatriate to their countries of origin as well as for other displaced and mobile populations. Finally, UNHCR will advocate for non-discriminatory practices and the provision of prevention and ART for refugees who are resettled in 3rd countries (i.e. countries other than those of asylum or origin).



"Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS"

The United Nations Children Fund will work with partners through the Global Campaign 'Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS' to provide and mobilize support, for the scaling up towards universal access consultative process, of child-focused comprehensive national HIV and AIDS programmes that are fully integrated within reproductive, child and adolescent health, education and social welfare services. Specifically, UNICEF will support the consideration of national efforts to ensure and increase access to programmes

- to prevent mother-to child transmission of HIV,
- provide pediatric treatment,
- prevent infection among adolescents, and
- protect and provide support for children affected by HIV/AIDS, including orphans.

As the lead UN agency on procurement and supply management including training, UNICEF will also work with national and international partners to ensure that the

establishment and strengthening of secure and reliable HIV/AIDS supply and distribution systems including capacity building for competitive cost estimation for ARVs, demand forecasting, procurement and supply management, and effective distribution systems are integrated in the universal access actions. Emphasis will also be placed on ensuring that the voices and opinions of children, adolescents and young people, especially the most vulnerable, are respected and considered in all facets of the process of scaling up the HIV and AIDS response.



Food and nutritional support to optimize the benefits of antiretroviral drugs.

WFP will actively advocate for and support scaling up comprehensive AIDS services towards universal access of antiretroviral therapy (ART) for people living with HIV through its country offices and regional bureaux. In response to growing recognition of the importance of food and nutritional support as part of comprehensive care for people living with HIV/AIDS, the World Food Programme now provides food support alongside anti-retroviral therapy in a number of African countries. WFP will continue to advocate for a comprehensive ART package that includes food and nutritional support for ART patients. WFP is working with WHO to design nutritional guidelines for care and treatment necessary to optimize the benefits of antiretroviral drugs. Furthermore, WFP has developed an unequalled outreach, logistics,

and communication capacity that can be used to access remote populations, and move supplies, staff or equipment especially during emergencies. This can be used to help UN partners deliver ART.



Scaling up towards universal access in the broader context of development

Through its leading role in addressing HIV, AIDS in the context of development, governance, trade, mainstreaming human rights and gender, the United Nations Development Programme will contribute to engage stakeholders in the process of scaling up towards universal access. UNDP will assist in facilitating civil society participation in the consultation process, particularly at regional and country level. Support will also be provided for ensuring that human rights concerns, including issues of stigma, discrimination and inequitable access, are addressed through universal access processes. To overcome barriers to treatment and promote access to affordable medicines, UNDP will work with governments and civil society to develop capacities to address the impact of Free Trade Agreements on the production and importation of ARVs.



Linking HIV and AIDS response with sexual and reproductive health and rights

UNFPA will continue to work to better link HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and to intensify prevention. UNFPA is committed to carrying out the recommendations of the Global Task Team on improving AIDS coordination. We will continue to focus our work with partners in three priority areas: HIV prevention among young people and adolescents; comprehensive condom programming of both male and female condoms; and HIV prevention in women and girls which requires a gender perspective and the protection of women's rights. Newly added responsibilities include meeting the sexual and reproductive health needs of women living with HIV and leading the UN system in addressing issues surrounding HIV/AIDS and sex work. We take these roles very seriously, and we are committed to doing our part, through joint UN support to countries, to expand HIV prevention.



UNITED NATIONS
Office on Drugs and Crime

Reaching out to injecting drug users, prisons and victims of human trafficking

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime through headquarters and its net of project, field and regional offices, will assist governments with the implementation of large-scale and comprehensive interventions

to prevent HIV infections and provide care and support to people infected and affected with HIV/AIDS. In particular, UNODC will focus on three key areas, namely HIV and AIDS as it relates to injecting drug use, prisons and victim of human trafficking. To achieve universal access to HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment, UNODC will support countries to increase coverage of HIV/AIDS services for these population groups. This will be done through assistance in assessments, capacity building (training a critical mass of service providers), legal and policy reviews and providing technical support.



Strengthening workplaces capacity and reaching out to formal and informal workers

The International Labour Organization contributes towards universal access by strengthening the capacity of workplaces to develop and implement HIV and AIDS workplace policies and programmes, and strengthening occupational safety and health services, to provide access to integrated HIV prevention, treatment and care services for workers and their families. ILO's tripartite structure and processes of social dialogue provide a platform to reach out to all workers, formal and informal, based on the rights based approach of the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work. Through access to workers' and employers' organizations and their networks, ILO ensures that workplace issues are fully integrated in HIV and AIDS action plans and national development strategies in support of the 'Three Ones'.

ILO's regional and sub-regional structures, and existing regional response capacity, will ensure an active role for business and labour in the national and regional consultations process of scaling up towards universal access. The collaborative platform with the key actors in the world of work provides a key entry point for strengthening the participation of a wide range of stakeholders and to leverage the enormous human resource contribution of civil society, including the active involvement of workers living with or affected by HIV and AIDS.

The ILO contribution to national consultations will contribute to identify practical solutions to the main obstacles to scaling up and address key challenges related to human rights, stigma and discrimination, and gender inequality, the employment relationship and improved productivity, balancing considerations of prevention and care at the public and private enterprise level.



Education to scale up access to prevention

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization will particularly seek to ensure the full and active participation of ministries of education and other key stakeholders in the education sector, exploring ways that the education sector can be fully engaged in the dialogue and planned actions relating to scaling up towards universal access. Through its leadership of the UNAIDS inter agency Global Initiative on Education and HIV/AIDS (EDUCAIDS), UNESCO will support the consideration of a holistic education sector response to HIV and AIDS, emphasizing key issues including human rights, equity, and

stigma and discrimination. UNESCO also proposes to build on its partnership with WHO to develop treatment education as a critical component of access to treatment, firmly establishing this as a core component of the continuum necessary in the response to HIV and AIDS.



Health sector response

The World Health Organization is rapidly and intensively assisting countries to plan for and implement rapid scale up of comprehensive and sustainable HIV prevention, treatment, care and support programs in the health sector within the context of scaling up towards universal access. These efforts build upon the momentum and lessons learned from the '3by5' initiative and the 2003 World Health Assembly endorsed Global Health Sector Strategy for HIV/AIDS 2003-2007. As the directing and coordinating authority on international health work, WHO takes the lead within the UN system in the global health sector response to HIV/AIDS and provides technical, evidence-based support to Member States and partners.

WHO is setting a vision and strategic directions for 2006-2010 on how it will guide and support countries' comprehensive health sector response towards universal access. An essential package will be developed, for country adaptation into their national plans and strategies, composed of health interventions for HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support, along with strong measurement systems to monitor progress and efforts to contribute to the broader strengthening of health systems.

WHO will invest in five strategic directions where it has a clear mandate and comparative advantage for its contribution to the process of scaling up towards universal access:

- (1) enabling individuals to know their HIV status through HIV testing and counseling;
- (2) accelerating the momentum of HIV/AIDS treatment and care scale-up;
- (3) maximizing the health sector's contribution to HIV prevention;
- (4) investing in strategic information to guide a more effective HIV/AIDS response and
- (5) taking urgent action to strengthen and expand health systems.

Within these directions WHO will concentrate its efforts to help countries with a limited number of priority interventions in the health sector that have the potential to significantly impact on the pandemic.



THE WORLD BANK

Funding for comprehensive HIV and AIDS programmes

The World Bank contributes to the effort to scale up towards universal access through funding for comprehensive HIV and AIDS programs in all regions and countries where the Bank finances HIV and AIDS and HIV and AIDS related projects and programs as well as through ensuring that HIV and AIDS is

part of the broader development agenda. As articulated in the Bank's Global HIV and AIDS Program of Action, the Bank will focus on the following priority areas for the next three years:

- Continued Bank funding for national and regional HIV/AIDS programs, especially for programs and groups not covered by other donors, and for strengthening health systems;
- Support for strengthening national HIV/AIDS strategies and annual action plans to ensure they are effectively prioritized, evidenced-based, strategic, and integrated into development planning instruments such as Poverty Reduction Strategies and Medium Term Expenditures Frameworks;
- Assist country implementing partners to accelerate implementation to increase the scope, efficiency, effectiveness and quality of priority activities and work to improve donor coordination and harmonization, including through the Global Task Team roll-out;
- Strengthen country monitoring and evaluation systems and evidence-based responses, to enable countries to assess and improve their programs;
- Analytic work and its dissemination, to improve AIDS knowledge and its use.

The movement towards universal access offers a framework for each UNAIDS Cosponsoring agency and the Secretariat to contribute to scaling up comprehensive AIDS services in countries. The UNAIDS Secretariat, working with its Cosponsors and relying on existing mechanisms, is ensuring coordinated approaches and maximizing synergies of its Cosponsors at all levels to support the scaling up of AIDS services in countries. Following up on the Secretary-General's directive in his letter of 12 December 2005, the UN system is forming joint United Nations teams on AIDS with one joint programme of support. This will go along way towards achieving ever greater cohesion and effectiveness in UN support to countries to scale up and move towards universal access.





More information and documents available at
www.unaids.org