UNAIDS partnership: working together on AIDS
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The UNAIDS partnership

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is an innovative United Nations (UN) venture that builds on each member’s mandate and competencies and prompts them to take collective action against AIDS. Its aim is to help mount and support an expanded response to AIDS one that engages the efforts of many sectors and partners from government and civil society.

Established in 1994 by a resolution of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and launched in January 1996, UNAIDS is guided by a Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) with representatives of 22 governments from all regions of the world. The ten UNAIDS Cosponsors (UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank), and five nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including associations of people living with HIV and AIDS, are non-voting members. The UNAIDS Secretariat and its Cosponsors also meet separately as the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations.

This brochure summarizes the various roles and sectors of activity through which the UNAIDS partners help countries respond to HIV and AIDS. While these are described separately for each partner, it is important to bear in mind that most UNAIDS action is planned jointly.
The UNAIDS Secretariat

UNAIDS is served by the Secretariat headquartered in Geneva, with offices in more than 60 countries and Cosponsor representation in almost all countries.

Leadership and coordination

The Joint Programme works to keep AIDS at the top of global and national agendas, promoting effective leadership and intensifying commitment at all levels.

UNAIDS served as Secretariat for the first-ever Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on HIV/AIDS in 2001, which resulted in the endorsement of a Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS by all 189 Member States. The Declaration established time-bound performance targets in the response to AIDS, with specific benchmarks for accountability.

The UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors continually engage leaders from all walks of life in the struggle against the epidemic. The UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors work with political, religious, cultural and social leaders throughout the world in the struggle against AIDS.

At country level, UNAIDS Country Coordinators provide practical support to the Cosponsors (who work together through the United Nations Theme Group on HIV/AIDS) and assist government and civil-society groups in implementing strategic action plans to tackle the epidemic. Catalytic funds are made available to support these activities.

Strategic information

The Programme assists governments in the development and implementation of detailed action plans to respond to AIDS with a wide variety of actors. (More than 100 countries had completed such strategic AIDS plans by December 2003.) It also promotes effective implementation of national strategic plans by assisting countries in drafting donor proposals, integrating AIDS strategies into broader development approaches such as poverty-reduction strategies, and undertaking programme reviews that gauge the effectiveness of AIDS-related efforts.

UNAIDS regularly generates front-page media coverage through public appearances, data releases, and issuance of such publications as the annual AIDS Epidemic Update. The annual World AIDS Campaign, which, in recent years, has focused on such topics as AIDS-related stigma and the importance of men in reducing the spread of infection, educates millions about the need to avoid HIV transmission and the importance of a more vigorous global response.

Tracking the epidemic

The Joint Programme is the world’s leading resource for epidemiological data on HIV and AIDS. Its biennial Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, issued in advance of the International AIDS
Conference, provides detailed information on HIV infection trends in key populations and in specific regions and countries. UNAIDS is also the world's leading provider of information on the sources, nature and level of AIDS-related spending.

UNAIDS is spearheading efforts to monitor and report on the world's progress in implementing the goals set forth in the UN General Assembly's Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. National and global measures developed by UNAIDS to assess progress towards the achievement of the Declaration's goals have been broadly embraced, with nearly 100 countries in 2003 providing comprehensive information on the status of national responses.

**Advocacy**

Both internationally and within countries, UNAIDS advocates an expanded response to the epidemic. It encourages the use of best practices, even when these are sensitive or controversial, such as those relating to sexual health education in schools. Most importantly, the Secretariat works to build commitment and support among governments, donors and private companies, and to bring on board a wide range of other partners, including religious organizations, non-governmental organizations, people living with HIV and AIDS and those whose lives are otherwise affected or threatened by the epidemic.

**UNAIDS: mission and goals**

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS is the main advocate for global action on the epidemic. It leads, strengthens and supports an expanded response aimed at preventing transmission of HIV, providing care and support, reducing the vulnerability of individuals and communities to HIV, and alleviating the impact of the epidemic.
UNHCR

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The agency is mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. UNHCR strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country. In more than five decades, the agency has helped an estimated 50 million people restart their lives.

UNHCR is at the forefront of combating HIV among a particularly vulnerable population. Refugees are at risk of infection as wars and conflicts expose them to poverty, family disintegration, social disruption and increased sexual violence. UNHCR recognises that HIV prevention is central to the overall protection of refugees. Specific attention is paid to the needs of refugee women and children.

To confront this challenge UNHCR is currently implementing its 2005–2007 Strategic Plan on Refugees and HIV and AIDS. In line with protection and basic human rights principles, the objectives are:

- to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers and other persons of concern to UNHCR who are affected by HIV and AIDS can live in dignity, free from discrimination, and that their human rights are respected, including their non-discriminatory enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health;
- to ensure that HIV policies and interventions for refugees are coordinated, mainstreamed and integrated with those at the international, regional, subregional, country and organizational levels;
- to develop and incorporate HIV policies and interventions into UNHCR’s programmes for durable solutions and to mitigate the long term effects of HIV;
- to ensure appropriate, integrated HIV interventions for refugees, returnees and other persons of concern; and
- to reduce HIV transmission and HIV morbidity through the development of quality HIV and AIDS programmes.

UNHCR strives to develop well coordinated multisectoral and multipartner approaches in close partnership with refugees, hosting communities, governments, civil society, UN partners and UNAIDS. UNHCR endeavours to integrate refugees in the HIV policies and programmes of the countries of asylum.
For 57 years, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has been working with partners around the world to promote the recognition and fulfilment of children’s rights. Its mission is guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which establishes children’s rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children.

UNICEF recognizes that HIV/AIDS has undermined, and even reversed, successes so far achieved in human development, and has exacerbated many of the interlocking problems that deny children their rights, including their rights to survival, education, nutrition, health, and protection from sexual exploitation, hazardous labour and discrimination on the basis of gender.

To confront this extraordinary challenge, UNICEF has established HIV/AIDS as a key priority in its programming in the coming years, and focuses on four key areas:

- HIV prevention among young people;
- prevention of parent-to-child transmission;
- care and support for children and parents living with HIV and AIDS; and
- protection, care and support for orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.

UNICEF supports activities at global, national and community levels in partnership with governments, partner UN agencies, nongovernmental organizations and community-based organizations, supported by a network of highly effective national committees. It works to understand the epidemic and assess its impact, evaluate the adequacy of current responses, and design and support the implementation of programmes to prevent HIV infection, address the impact of HIV/AIDS on children, young people and families, eliminate stigma, and empower children, young people, families and communities to cope with the impact of HIV/AIDS and bring about social change. UNICEF brings to UNAIDS its demonstrated effectiveness in communication and advocacy and the strategic advantage of its extensive field presence and country programmes of cooperation in 158 countries. Addressing the rights of especially vulnerable children, young people and families is a particular UNICEF strength, which will assume greater importance in the coming years.
**WFP**

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the world’s largest humanitarian agency. WFP combats hunger wherever it occurs. In 2003, WFP provided food to 110 million people worldwide.

WFP is fully committed to its role in the global response to HIV and AIDS. HIV/AIDS and malnutrition often operate in tandem—poor nutrition increases the progression of the disease, while HIV/AIDS exacerbates malnutrition. Good nutrition helps to prolong an HIV-infected person’s life as well as improve her/his quality of life; it also enhances the body’s ability to fight opportunistic infections. People living with HIV and AIDS, who are on antiretroviral therapies, need adequate nutrition in order to improve treatment outcomes.

WFP has HIV/AIDS interventions in 41 countries worldwide and an operational presence in 22 of the 25 countries with the highest national HIV prevalence rates. Interventions include HIV awareness and prevention, AIDS mitigation, and direct nutritional support to people living with HIV/AIDS and their families.

Basic education, especially for girls, is critical to improving their health and nutrition as well as stemming the spread of HIV. WFP complements its school feeding programmes with HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention information. Take-home rations are also provided for the most vulnerable children to help ensure that they stay in school.

WFP places women at the centre of the fight against AIDS. WFP uses food assistance to support livelihood diversification activities that contribute to the food and economic security of the household. Training in agricultural production and income-generating activities for women and older orphans go a long way towards protecting the future of the family, and may guard against economic impoverishment after the death of a breadwinner. WFP also makes sure that, when necessary, food is part of prevention-of-mother-to-child transmission programmes (PMTCT).

WFP works closely with partners to make sure that home-based-care programmes include a food component. Nutritional supplements improve the lives of those infected with HIV and their families. WFP also works to make sure that the food assistance is linked to training and educational opportunities for family members in order to improve their economic prospects for the future.

Recognizing the role that mobility plays in the spread of HIV, WFP is undertaking a major initiative to ensure that its contracted transport workers have sufficient information and means to prevent the further spread of HIV.
The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the UN’s global development network, advocating change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. UNDP works in 166 countries, supporting them to create their own solutions to global and national development challenges. In 2000, HIV/AIDS became one of UNDP’s top organizational priorities, and is now integrated into its overall mission to provide developing countries with knowledge-based policy advice and operational support, focusing on the entire range of issues that pertain to reducing poverty, building institutional capacity, improving effective governance, and managing the challenges of globalization.

UNDP works to create an enabling policy, legislative and resource environment for an effective response to HIV/AIDS focusing on the governance challenge of planning, coordinating and implementing a multisectoral response. Recognizing that success in reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS is contingent upon an expanded response involving a wide range of actors and institutions well beyond the health sector, UNDP works in partnership with other agencies to:

- engage and develop the capacity of key leaders from government, civil society and the private sector to lead large-scale, multisectoral and multi-level responses;
- strengthen community capacity for action, social mobilization and change;
- integrate HIV/AIDS priorities into development planning instruments, including National Development Plans and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers;
- support the formulation of results-oriented and multisectoral national strategic AIDS plans; and
- gain support from the media to generate society-wide transformation of norms, values and practices that curb the spread of HIV.

As a trusted development partner, UNDP supports countries in placing HIV/AIDS at the centre of national development dialogue; helps countries to develop capacity for action as well as to plan, manage and implement their responses to the epidemic; promotes decentralized responses and community-level action; works for the empowerment and greater involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS; integrates a human rights framework and gender perspective into all aspects of the response; and raises domestic and international resources for national programmes.
HIV prevention is a priority of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) it has supported programmes in more than 140 countries. Applying over three decades of experience in reproductive health, the UNFPA supports a spectrum of immediate and long-term actions to prevent the transmission of HIV in a variety of settings including communities, health services, and conflict situations.

UNFPA’s contribution to combating HIV focuses on the following three approaches:

- Preventing HIV infection among young people by promoting reproductive health rights and safer sexual behaviours, supporting the provision of youth-friendly reproductive health information, education, skills and services, empowering young women to adopt safer sexual behaviour and refuse unwanted sexual relations, and persuading young men to assume more responsibility for protecting themselves and their partners.

- Preventing HIV infection among pregnant women, especially within maternal health services, including the provision of information on HIV, counselling on safer sexual behaviour, HIV voluntary counselling and testing, diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, partner involvement, and provision of condoms. UNFPA also supports programmes to prevent mother-to-child transmission, which include primary prevention, safer delivery practices, counselling on infant feeding, promoting reproductive health rights, and referral to, and support of, antiretroviral therapy for women, their partners and families.

- Improving access to, and ensuring the consistent use of, male and female condoms to reduce the transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections that contribute to the spread of HIV. Broad technical support ranges from addressing user needs and perspectives, to logistics systems, quality control, forecasting and procurement of high-quality preventive commodities at low cost.

UNFPA also supports behavioural change communication for HIV prevention, HIV voluntary testing and counselling, services to manage sexually transmitted infections, meeting the reproductive health needs of HIV-positive women, efforts to address the gender dimensions of the epidemic, and demographic and socio-cultural studies to guide programme and policy development.

Advocating intensified national and international action against HIV/AIDS and embracing UN reform, UNFPA works in partnership with governments, civil society, the United Nations system and others to promote universal access to reproductive health services as a vital entry and delivery point for HIV prevention, care and treatment programmes.
UNODC

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) was established to implement the drug and crime programmes of the United Nations in an integrated manner, addressing the interrelated issues of drug control, crime prevention and international terrorism, within the context of sustainable development and human security.

Through its drug programme, UNODC serves inter alia as the central drug control entity with exclusive responsibility for coordinating and providing effective leadership for all United Nations drug-control activities. It also acts as the repository of technical expertise in international drug control for UN agencies and member states, by providing advice on issues of international and national drug control.

Through its crime programme, UNODC is responsible for:

- carrying out activities in international crime prevention and control;
- strengthening regional and international cooperation in preventing and combating transnational crime—in particular, organized and economic crime, money-laundering, trafficking of women and children, financial crime, and terrorism in all its forms; and
- promoting the effective and fair administration of justice, with due respect for the rights of all those affected by crime or involved in the criminal justice system.

As a UNAIDS Cosponsor since 1999, UNODC’s HIV/AIDS activities support governments through a comprehensive approach to prevention and care, with a view to reducing the negative health and social consequences of drug use, including bloodborne infections such as HIV and hepatitis C, caused by the sharing of contaminated needles and unprotected sexual intercourse.

In the field of criminal justice, UNODC assists governments in the implementation of international instruments, norms, standards and resolutions, addressing the health of prisoners. This means helping to ensure that all prisoners with HIV and AIDS have the right to receive health care, including preventive measures, equivalent to those applicable within their community, without discrimination and regardless of their legal status or nationality.

UNODC has introduced specific interventions to strengthen the capacity of governments to combat all forms of human trafficking, at the national and international levels. These interventions assist countries of origin, transit and destination, in the development of joint strategies and viable measures to prevent trafficking. They are also designed to provide practical advice and guidance to protect victims of trafficking, and avert or reduce its negative health and social consequences, particularly HIV infection.

UNODC operates from its headquarters in Vienna, as well as through a network of 12 regional and 10 country offices. A liaison office is located in New York.
The International Labour Organization (ILO) was established in 1919 and is the United Nations agency with special responsibility for the world of work. Its primary objective is to promote decent work and productive employment for all, based on the principles of social justice and equality.

The organization’s four areas of focus are: fundamental principles and rights at work; opportunities for employment and income-generation; social protection; and social dialogue.

The great majority of those with HIV and AIDS are workers in their productive prime. For this reason, the epidemic has become a development crisis. It threatens livelihoods, productivity, rights at work, and economic growth. It also exacerbates existing problems of inadequate social protection, gender inequalities and child labour. By preventing the transfer of human capital from one generation to the next, the epidemic will cause economic collapse in a number of countries, unless there is an urgent multisectoral response.

The ILO’s particular contribution to UNAIDS includes:

- its tripartite membership in 177 member states, promoting the mobilization of governments, employers and workers against HIV/AIDS;
- direct access to the world of work a highly effective entry point for HIV/AIDS prevention measures, with a focus on education and practical support for behavioural change, and for the care and support of affected persons;
- long-standing experience in framing international standards to protect the rights of workers;
- a global network of field offices and a well-established record of technical assistance; and
- substantial experience in, and resources for research and information dissemination.

In 2001, the ILO produced a Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work. This establishes principles for HIV/AIDS policies at enterprise, sectoral and national levels, and practical guidelines for programmes of prevention, care and treatment at the workplace. Complemented by a comprehensive education and training manual, the Code has so far been translated into over 30 languages, and forms the basis for workplace action against HIV/AIDS in over 50 countries. The ILO is implementing the Code through technical cooperation, training and advisory services to its tripartite partners and others with a stake in the world of work.
Within the UN system, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has a special responsibility for education. Ignorance is a major reason why the epidemic is out of control. The need for preventive education flows from the types of ignorance associated with the epidemic, particularly in the most affected developing countries: most of those infected do not know it, there is sparse knowledge about the disease itself, many misconceptions exist about possible remedies, and many people are misinformed about the facts on HIV/AIDS, which leads to prejudice and discrimination. Hence, preventive education is at the top of UNESCO’s agenda.

Preventive education must make people aware of the risks they face, of the prevention methods available for them to protect themselves, and of the urgent need to stop the spread of HIV. However, knowledge alone is often insufficient to change behaviour. Preventive education must address mentalities and the culture within which they are embedded in order to generate the attitudes, provide the skills, and sustain the motivation necessary for changing behaviour to reduce risk and vulnerability.

UNESCO’s priority in preventive education is directed towards five core tasks:

- **Advocacy at all levels**: UNESCO will engage ministries, agencies and nongovernmental organizations under its mandate, such as those for education, science, culture, communication and sports, as well as civil society and the private sector.

- **Customizing the message**: developing effective and culturally sensitive messages towards target groups, in particular for those at most risk.

- **Changing risky behaviours and reducing vulnerability**: promoting education programmes formal and non-formal so that all young people know the facts about HIV/AIDS and how to prevent infection and act on this knowledge, in schools that are safe and environments that are protective.

- **Caring for the infected and affected**: the knowledge, attitude and skills to provide care for the infected and affected is a vital part of any programme in preventive education. The infected and affected must be actively engaged and supported in their efforts to address the epidemic in communities around the world.

- **Coping with the institutional impacts**: the increased demands for care and the loss of professionals further stretch already-overburdened health and education systems. Protecting the core functions of key social, economic and political institutions that are affected by HIV/AIDS is therefore a critical task. Consequently, UNESCO will develop and disseminate tools for monitoring, assessing and responding to the impact of the epidemic on schools, students, teachers and other key institutions at the country level.
WHO

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the global health authority working with its partners and member states towards the achievement of “the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health”*

WHO established the Special Programme on AIDS in 1986 in order to respond to the emerging HIV/AIDS epidemic. In 1987, the programme became the Global Programme on AIDS (GPA), which was ultimately dismantled in 1996 with the creation of UNAIDS. Throughout its 10-year existence, GPA advocated the need for a multisectoral response to the epidemic, which WHO still advocates to this day.

As a Co-sponsor of UNAIDS, WHO focuses its work on providing normative and technical guidance and support to countries in the following areas:

- knowledge about the trends of the epidemic, including strengthening surveillance systems and monitoring and evaluating health-sector responses;
- technical guidance on, and advocacy for, best practices in key health-sector interventions in HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support;
- facilitation of research on new technologies and effective interventions;
- provision of technical support for implementation of strategies and programmes; and
- support in the mobilization of resources for the health sector.

As the agency coordinating the implementation of the Global Health-Sector Strategy on HIV/AIDS, WHO promotes increased access to a comprehensive response that includes key interventions such as testing and counselling services, prevention of HIV infection (especially among vulnerable groups), prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, prevention of mother-to-child transmission, and treatment, care and support.

Increased attention is now being paid to the expansion of access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) as a core component of a comprehensive health-sector response to HIV/AIDS. In 2003, WHO and its partners declared the failure to deliver HIV/AIDS treatment “a global health emergency” and launched a global strategy to reach the ‘3 by 5’ target – treating 3 million people with AIDS by the end of 2005.

The ‘3 by 5’ strategic framework includes revised, simplified and standardized guidelines on the application of antiretroviral therapy in resource-constrained settings; an AIDS medicine and diagnostic service to support the procurement and supply of HIV drugs and diagnostics; standardized monitoring and evaluation tools; training packages for professional and lay health workers on ART; and initiatives to build the capacity of communities and community-based organizations, including people living with HIV/AIDS, to participate fully in the delivery of antiretroviral treatment services.

Achieving the ‘3 by 5’ target should contribute significantly to the overall strengthening of health systems. WHO and its partners are working towards the development of equitable, affordable and sustainable approaches to ensure universal access to antiretroviral treatment for all who need it.

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* Health is defined as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” — WHO Constitution, 1948.
With its seemingly relentless march across countries and regions, HIV poses an unprecedented threat to the physical, social and economic welfare of people, their families, and communities. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is also reversing hard-won gains over recent decades in terms of poverty reduction, improved living standards through better health and education, and longer life-expectancy rates. To meet the formidable challenge of HIV, and to intensify the fight against poverty, the World Bank is committed to building a substantially stronger and more effective national and global response to the epidemic in partnership with others.

Given the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on development, the World Bank has placed HIV/AIDS at the centre of its development agenda, and works to incorporate this priority into all its work programmes. Since the epidemic began in the 1980s, the World Bank, with its mission to fight poverty, has been one of the largest providers of financial support for HIV/AIDS programmes in developing countries. In the last few years, US$1.6 billion have been committed through grants, loans and credits for HIV/AIDS-related activities worldwide, most of which have come through the Multi-Country HIV/AIDS Programmes (MAPs) for Africa and the Caribbean.

MAP has channelled resources to thousands of nongovernmental organizations, community and faith-based organizations and public-sector agencies across sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean. This represents the first time that most countries have had such effective tools for supporting the work of civil society in the field of HIV/AIDS at the community and national levels.

The Bank works closely with UNAIDS and other partners to coordinate its work at the country and regional level in providing strategic analysis, policy advice and technical expertise. It houses the Global HIV/AIDS Monitoring and Evaluation Support Team (GAMET) and serves as trustee for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Experience with HIV/AIDS shows that careful development planning today can avert health and development catastrophes tomorrow.

The World Bank is dedicated to fighting HIV/AIDS and building partnerships to halt, and eventually reverse, the spread of the epidemic.
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