

BELGIUM AND UNAIDS

Aligned behind an effective AIDS response

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Belgium has been a valued partner of UNAIDS since the founding of the Joint Programme, and it considers UNAIDS to be the best institutional context for steering the global HIV and AIDS response and a model for United Nations (UN) reform. Belgium has invested energy and resources to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people and communities affected by HIV, with a focus on human rights, gender equality, key populations, health systems strengthening, and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Annual core funding to UNAIDS from Belgium



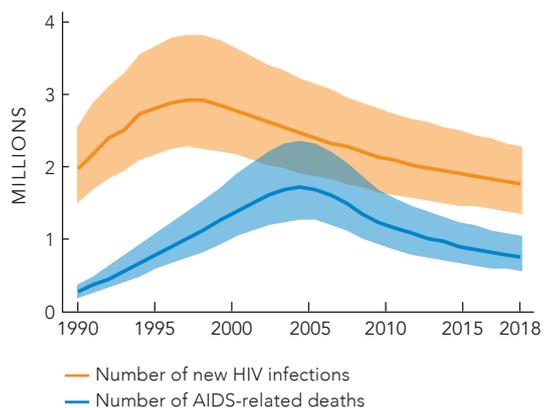
Since the beginning of the epidemic, Belgian scientists, researchers and pharmaceutical companies have worked to increase the effectiveness of a comprehensive HIV response. Belgium's first National Action Plan on HIV (2014–2019) has been pivotal in Belgium's AIDS response and progress towards the 90–90–90 targets. A champion of flexible financing, Belgium has contributed core funding to UNAIDS since the inception of the Joint Programme. Belgium is a key donor, contributing €12 million (US\$ 13.4 million) to UNAIDS during 2017–2020. In addition, the Government of Flanders supports UNAIDS through a separate funding agreement, providing €1.5 million (US\$ 1.7 million) for 2019–2020.

Among the 37.9 million people living with HIV worldwide, 23.3 million now have access to antiretroviral therapy. Furthermore, deaths from AIDS-related illness have been reduced by more than 56% since the peak in 2004, and new HIV infections have been reduced by 40% since the peak in 1997.

There is still much work to do. The current pace of decline in new HIV infections is not enough to reach prevention targets, and key populations and their partners now make up more than half (54%) of all new HIV infections. Every week in western and central Africa, around 1100 adolescent girls and young women aged 15–24 years become infected with HIV. Results from the Evidence for Contraceptive Options and HIV Outcomes (ECHO) study highlight the need for focused combination HIV prevention efforts, integrated and intensified within sexual and reproductive health services.

In 2018, 14.6 million people worldwide did not have access to treatment, and 8.1 million did not even know they had the virus. AIDS is not over.

New HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths globally, 1990–2018



Source: UNAIDS 2019 estimates.

SHARED PRIORITIES: PREVENTION

In alignment with Belgium's focus on prevention, UNAIDS co-chairs the **Global HIV Prevention Coalition**, which strengthens and sustains political commitment for HIV prevention by setting a common agenda among key policy-makers, funders and programme implementers. Among the 28 countries that have endorsed the HIV Prevention 2020 Road Map, the Coalition has transformed national HIV prevention responses, which are now consistently aligned to the appropriate HIV primary prevention pillars: adolescent girls and young women, key populations, condoms, voluntary medical male circumcision and antiretroviral-based prevention.

SHARED PRIORITIES: ACCELERATION OF QUALITY-ASSURED TREATMENT

In 2016, UNAIDS and partners established the western and central Africa catch-up plan to address bottlenecks and accelerate national responses in a region where millions of people are being left behind in the global AIDS response. In line with Belgium's priorities, UNAIDS and partners provide technical support to implement innovative care models and negotiate more affordable and quality-assured HIV treatment. With its partners, UNAIDS is also facilitating high-level negotiations with government and key partners to establish an 18-month emergency stock of quality-assured HIV-related products and an effective distribution system.

MAKING INVESTMENTS WORK

Through their complementary roles, UNAIDS and the **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria** (the Global Fund) are striving together to end the AIDS epidemic. Belgium has pledged €60 million to the Global Fund for 2017–2020. Support to countries in planning, leveraging and implementing Global Fund investments is a mainstay of UNAIDS country office work. With six regional offices and a presence in more than 75 countries, UNAIDS ensures that technical support is available and maximizes Belgium's return on its investment, with a shared focus on transparency, value for money, inclusion of civil society in governance and implementation, alignment to national programmes, collaboration with partners and support for the most vulnerable.



Alexander De Croo, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Development Cooperation, with participants of a Grassroot Soccer community project, supported by UNAIDS, in Cape Town, South Africa, on World Aids Day 2018. Credit: Belgium Ministry of Foreign Affairs

SHARED PRIORITIES: INTEGRATING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS AND HIV

In alignment with Belgium's priorities, UNAIDS strengthens the synergies between sexual and reproductive health and rights and HIV at the policy, programme and service levels. UNAIDS advocates for the integration of HIV and sexual and reproductive health services, including those for cervical cancer. The World Health Organization (WHO) and UNAIDS have developed a **joint advocacy brief** that presents scientific evidence on the links between HIV, the human papillomavirus (HPV) and cervical cancer. UNAIDS supports advocacy efforts by civil society and engages with policy-makers and other partners, making the case for the urgent need to integrate HIV and cervical cancer prevention, screening and treatment services.

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

As members of the Equal Rights Coalition, Belgium and UNAIDS work together to promote universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. The Coalition has a particular focus on ensuring the full and equal enjoyment of rights by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons worldwide.

UNAIDS also promotes the integration of the AIDS response into development efforts and strengthened health and community systems. For example, in keeping with the wider drive for **universal health coverage**, the UNAIDS Fast-Track Strategy emphasizes people-centred and community-engaged services, and it highlights the importance of social protection programmes.

Dr Peter Piot, from Belgium, was Executive Director of UNAIDS from its creation in 1995 until the end of 2008. Credit: UNAIDS



UNAIDS: AT THE FOREFRONT OF ENDING AIDS

As the world takes stock of progress towards the UNAIDS **Fast-Track Targets**, as agreed by United Nations Member States in the **2016 Political Declaration on Ending AIDS**, UNAIDS is providing the strategic direction, coordination and technical support needed to meet the time-bound targets and ensure that no one is left behind.

By connecting governments with **civil society** and the private sector and making sure that people living with HIV are at the centre of decision-making processes, UNAIDS is helping to ensure that everyone in need has access to life-saving HIV prevention, treatment and care services. As part of this work, UNAIDS' collaboration with UNFPA to establish the **Global HIV Prevention Coalition** is uniting partners to reduce new HIV infections by 75% by 2020.

Through the **90–90–90** treatment targets, UNAIDS is pushing progress so that 90% of people living with HIV know their HIV status, 90% of people who know their HIV-positive status are accessing treatment and 90% of people on treatment have suppressed viral loads, keeping them healthy and preventing transmission of the virus. UNAIDS is also helping to bring the world one step closer to achieving an AIDS-free generation by keeping the world focused on eliminating new HIV infections among children and keeping their mothers alive through a Super-Fast-Track approach.

UNAIDS is working to end gender inequalities and all forms of violence and discrimination against **women and girls** by providing platforms for their participation and working with partners and governments. Furthermore, its efforts to champion and protect the rights of women, adolescents and **key populations** are ensuring that women in all their diversity, gay men and other men who have sex with men, sex workers, transgender people, people who inject drugs, prisoners and other incarcerated people, and migrants can access the HIV services they need.

UNAIDS is also ensuring that progress towards **universal health coverage** is truly universal by

advocating for progress on equity, inclusion and social justice. Its people-centred, human rights-based approach promotes community-led service delivery and advocates for the need to address the social determinants of health, including pursuing necessary law and policy reforms and removing stigma and discrimination.

Having generated the world's most extensive **data collection** on HIV epidemiology and programme coverage, UNAIDS is the most authoritative and up-to-date source of information on the HIV epidemic—which is vital to informing and guiding an effective response to HIV. UNAIDS works with countries to determine their AIDS investment needs and advocates for increased resources from both domestic and international sources, thus ensuring funds are available and impact is maximized.

The **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** takes to scale what the AIDS response has been working towards for 30 years: a multisectoral, rights-based and people-centred approach that addresses the determinants of health and well-being. UNAIDS makes the link between the many intersections between the AIDS epidemic and other health, human rights and broader development issues to advance progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The only Joint Programme in the United Nations system, UNAIDS unites the experience and expertise of 11 United Nations **Cosponsors**: UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. UNAIDS draws on this experience to engage actively in the United Nations reform agenda, sharing both successes and lessons learned.

UNAIDS has a vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths, and a principle of leaving no one behind. With support from our donors, UNAIDS is working to make this vision a reality.



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