

UNAIDS High Level Commission on HIV Prevention



World AIDS Day, 1 December 2010

Declaration

The world has entered a critical new phase in response to the HIV pandemic, featuring genuine causes for optimism that the numbers of people newly infected with HIV can shrink and the global pandemic might steadily decline in size and scope, especially as new tools for prevention move from invention to implementation. But this ray of hope is challenged amid ebbing financial commitments to the pandemic fight by all parties, insufficient political commitment among most leaders of the countries that are most severely affected and systemic inequity in skills and resources that can be routinely applied to understanding the dynamic changes in local epidemics, enabling correct methods to be selected for effectively blocking the spread of HIV. The number of people newly infected with HIV has dropped by nearly 20% in the past 10 years, yet every day 7000 people get infected with HIV.

This is not acceptable. Far greater reductions in the numbers of people infected with HIV globally can and must be achieved. Despite recent successes in HIV prevention, the toll of individuals who are newly infected worldwide still outnumbers by 2 to 1 the combined sum of those surviving thanks to appropriate treatment minus those dying: the pandemic is still growing. Continued expansion of the HIV pandemic is not an option: the numbers of lives lost, families disrupted and finances strained are simply intolerable.

Substantial change must be realized. Political, religious, business and cultural leaders must appreciate their critical roles in this effort and acknowledge that many effective tools and strategies are already in hand to curb the pandemic. Moreover, promising new tools are in the development pipeline, and they are needed. Reductions in HIV infection rates can only be sustained in the long term, however, when the unique nature of the epidemic in each country or region is fully understood, strategies for prevention are carefully tailored to the respective conditions and effectiveness is assessed routinely and over years or even decades. One prevention strategy does not fit all.

Although earnest and often costly efforts are underway all over the world, the UNAIDS High Level Commission on HIV Prevention finds that they lack the rigorous assessment that can determine whether they are working, should be scaled up, require revision or should be abandoned. Moreover, health leaders are spending resources on too many poorly defined interventions, often generated by outside donors, consultants or international groups, without having a clear sense derived from data of who is becoming infected in their society and how and why.

The UNAIDS High Level Commission on HIV Prevention calls for a prevention revolution featuring four key elements:

- rapidly scaling up successful prevention tactics, amid strong leadership commitment and donor support;
- developing and using methods for measuring and describing the dynamic nature of every country's epidemic, including routinely measuring incidence, providing leaders and policy-makers with the capacity to know their epidemic and to direct scarce resources appropriately;
- enhancing the accountability of political and business leaders, as well as nongovernmental groups and health professionals, based on data-driven assessment of their commitment to funding HIV prevention and appropriate implementation; and
- expanding the practical protection of human rights to overcome the inequities that drive the spread of HIV, globally and locally, and to reduce the threat HIV poses to specific population groups the world over.

Commissioners

Françoise Barré-Sinoussi (Co-Chair) (France),
Director, Regulation of Retroviral Infections Unit,
Institut Pasteur and IAS Governing Council Member.

Desmond Tutu (Co-Chair) (South Africa),
Anglican Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town.

Michelle Bachelet (Chile),
Head of UN Women and Founder and President,
Fundación Dialoga.

Jacques Chirac (France),
Founder and President of the Fondation Chirac, au
service de la paix.

Vuyiseka Dubula (South Africa),
General Secretary, Treatment Action Campaign
(TAC), Member of the Pan African Treatment Access
Movement (PATAM).

Mohamed Mostafa ElBaradei (Egypt),
Founder and President, National Association for
Change.

Pau Gasol (Spain),
Basketball player, Los Angeles Lakers.

Nizan Guanaes (Brazil),
Chairman Grupo ABC de Comunicação.

Chris Hughes (USA),
Executive Director, Jumo International, Inc.

Earvin "Magic" Johnson (USA),
Founder and Chairman, The Magic Johnson
Foundation.

Irene Khan (Bangladesh),
International Expert on Human Rights.

Robin Li (People's Republic of China),
Co-Founder, Chairman and CEO, Baidu, Inc.

H.E. Festus Mogae (Botswana), Chairman,
Champions for an HIV-Free Generation.

Elena Pinchuk (Ukraine),
Founder and Chairman, Elena Pinchuk ANTIAIDS
Foundation.

H.E. Jean Ping (Gabon),
Chairperson, African Union Commission.

Peter Piot (Belgium),
Director, London School of Hygiene and Tropical
Medicine and Professor of Global Health.

Vladimir Vladimirovich Pozner (Russian
Federation), Dean, School for Television Excellence.

Rita Süßmuth (Germany),
Member, Christian Democratic Union, President,
Consortium of German Universities.

Mechai Viravaidya (Thailand),
Chairman, Population and Community Development
Association.