

ACTION FOR AIDS MEDIA RELEASE FOR WORLD AIDS DAY 2017

HIV & AIDS in Singapore: Getting onto the Fast Track to Stop AIDS and HIV

In 2014, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) announced its ambitious treatment target to end AIDS as a major public health epidemic by 2030ⁱ. To achieve this, countries were asked to work towards the goal of “90-90-90” by the year 2020. This means that 90% of people living with HIV should know their HIV status; 90% of people who know their HIV-positive status should be on treatment; and 90% of people on treatment should have suppressed viral loads.

HIV treatment is a critical tool towards ending the AIDS epidemic, but it is not the only one. While taking action to maximize the prevention effects of HIV treatment, urgent efforts are similarly needed to scale up other core prevention strategies.

The Fast Track Cities Initiative^{ii iii} (www.iapac.org/cities) was also launched in Paris on World AIDS Day in 2014. Today, more than 70 cities around the world have signed the *Paris Declaration on Fast-Track Cities Ending AIDS*, engaging political leadership, affected communities, civil society, city health officials, clinical and service providers, and other stakeholders to accelerate their local AIDS responses. Cities with clear commitment towards fighting HIV include Amsterdam, Paris and San Francisco. They have taken a leadership role to share their experiences and strategies to end HIV transmission. Many cities are now recording significant reductions not only in the number of cases of AIDS, but also in the number of new HIV infections^{iv v vi vii viii}.

Cities that have joined this movement have put in place effective partnerships between government, community, and local health departments. Their programmes have clear objectives and measurable targets to ensure HIV services and resources are optimally utilized and directed towards those most in need, have the greatest impact, are the most cost-effective, and have the goal of not only preventing HIV-infected persons from developing AIDS, but also stopping HIV transmission altogether.

Action for AIDS strongly believes that Singapore is well placed to end AIDS and to stop the transmission of HIV. Strategies and programmes needed to reach these objectives should include the following:

- Support and promote HIV testing, especially for hidden populations at risk, including those with unsuspected HIV and those presenting with late diagnosis.
- Increase the focus on vulnerable key populations viz. MSM, through adequate allocation of resources and programmes that meet their needs.
- Refine and re-energise media and communication strategies to promote safe sex and HIV testing for key populations.
- Introduce and support the scale-up of the highly effective prevention strategy Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and ensure it is affordable to those who need it.
- Harness innovative service delivery models including expanding the reach and breadth of community based services, not just for testing and education, but also for PrEP.
- Improve access to and affordability of anti-retroviral treatment and care.
- Implement stigma reduction strategies, particularly in the workplace, in healthcare and education settings.
- Plan and implement an HIV Response Blueprint that has clear deliverables and targets, objective monitoring and evaluation, provide strategic resources, and ensure close collaboration and coordination among stakeholders and partners.

Singapore has a well-educated population, world-class healthcare system, advanced communications infrastructure, and access to the best experience and expertise to be one of the first cities to end AIDS and stop the spread of HIV.

MEDIA CONTACT: Sumita Banerjee, Action for AIDS, Singapore

Email: sumita.banerjee@afa.org.sg

ⁱ 90-90-90 An ambitious treatment target to help end the AIDS epidemic.
http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/90-90-90_en_0.pdf

ⁱⁱ <http://www.iapac.org/cities/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.fast-trackcities.org/>

^{iv} Sydney - NSW 'on track' to virtually eliminate transmission by 2020
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-08-23/record-low-hiv-rates-in-nsw/8835380>

^v San Francisco - Aggressive prevention pays off as new HIV infections in SF hit a record low.
<http://www.sfgate.com/health/article/Aggressive-prevention-pays-off-as-new-HIV-12201204.php>

^{vi} Amsterdam - on the way to becoming an AIDS-free city. <https://www.hiv-monitoring.nl/english/servicepages/newsoverview/amsterdam-way-becoming-aids-free-city/>

^{vii} Melbourne - New cases drop amid expanded drug trial.
<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/health/new-cases-drop-amid-expanded-drug-trial/news-story/aa54a9cd98944f0b3ddc84c615e77992>

^{viii} London - HIV cases among gay men fall dramatically as experts hail 'most exciting development in 20 years' <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/hiv-cases-gay-men-falls-drops-diagnosis-bisexual-development-epidemic-aids-virus-health-a7980541.html>

APPENDIX 1: PARIS DECLARATION & THE FAST TRACK CITIES INITIATIVE COMMITMENTS (www.fast-trackcities.org/about)

1. End AIDS as a public health threat in cities by 2030. We commit to rapidly reduce new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths, including from tuberculosis (TB) and comorbid diseases, including viral hepatitis, putting us on the fast-track to ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. We commit to provide sustained access to testing, treatment, and prevention services. We will end stigma and discrimination.

2. Put people at the center of everything we do. We will focus, especially on people who are vulnerable and marginalized. We will respect human rights and leave no one behind. We will act locally and in partnership with our communities to galvanize global support for healthy and resilient societies and for sustainable development.

3. Address the causes of risk, vulnerability and transmission. We will use all means including municipal ordinances and other tools to address factors that make people vulnerable to HIV, and other diseases. We will work closely with communities, service providers, law enforcement and other partners, and with marginalized and vulnerable populations including slum dwellers, displaced people, young women, sex workers, people who use drugs, migrants, men who have sex with men, and transgender people to build and foster tolerance.

4. Use our AIDS response for positive social transformation. Our leadership will leverage innovative social transformation to build societies that are equitable, inclusive, responsive, resilient, and sustainable. We will integrate health and social programs to improve the delivery of services including HIV, tuberculosis, and other diseases. We will use advances in science, technology, and communication to drive this agenda.

5. Build and accelerate an appropriate response to local needs. We will develop and promote services that are innovative, safe, accessible, equitable, and free of stigma and discrimination. We will encourage and foster community leadership and engagement to build demand and to deliver services responsive to local needs.

6. Mobilize resources for integrated public health and development. Investing in the AIDS response, together with a strong commitment to public health, is a sound investment in the future of our cities that fosters productivity, shared prosperity and well-being. We will adapt our city plans and resources for a fast-tracked response. We will develop innovative funding and mobilize additional resources and strategies to end AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030.

7. Unite as leaders. We commit to develop an action plan and join with a network of cities to make the Paris Declaration a reality. Working in broad consultation with everyone concerned, we will regularly measure our results and adjust our responses to be faster, smarter, and more effective. We will support other cities and share our experiences, knowledge, and data about what works and what can be improved. We will report annually on our progress.