HIV continues to be a major global public health issue. In 2017 an estimated 36.9 million people were living with HIV (including 1.8 million children) - with a global HIV prevalence of 0.8% among adults. Around 25% of these same people do not know that they have the virus.1

Since the start of the epidemic, an estimated 77.3 million people have become infected with HIV and 35.4 million people have died of AIDS-related illnesses. In 2017, 940,000 people died of AIDS-related illnesses. This number has reduced by more than 51% (1.9 million) since the peak in 2004 and 1.4 million in 2010.2

The vast majority of people living with HIV are located in low- and middle- income countries, with an estimated 66% living in sub-Saharan Africa. Among this group 19.6 million are living in East and Southern Africa which saw 800,000 new HIV infections in 2017.3
Reaching the 90 90 90 targets

While there has been progress towards UNAIDS’ 90-90-90 targets for prevention and treatment, this appears to be stalling and at current rates the targets will not be achieved by the 2020 deadline.

The first 90
In 2017, three out of four people living with HIV (75%) knew their status.

The second 90
Among people who knew their status, four out of five (79%) were accessing treatment.

The third 90
And among people accessing treatment, four out of five (81%) were virally suppressed. West and Central Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia are regions where urgent action is particularly important if we are to reach the targets.
New infections

There is renewed concern that the annual number of new infections among adults has remained static in recent years. In 2017, there were roughly 1.8 million new HIV infections – the same as in 2016.4

Global new HIV infections have declined by just 18% in the past seven years, from 2.2 million in 2010 to 1.8 million in 2017. Although this is nearly half the number of new infections compared to the peak in 1996 (3.4 million), the decline is not quick enough to reach the target of fewer than 500,000 by 2020.

While new HIV infections among children globally have also declined, from 270,000 in 2010 to 180,000 in 2017 (35%), reports indicate that this is far less progress being made than previously thought and there is much more that needs to be done to improve knowledge of HIV and HIV testing among adolescents and young adults.
Young women are especially at risk, with around 7,000 new infections each week among young people aged 15-24 occurring among this group. In sub-Saharan Africa, three in four new infections are among girls aged 15–19 years and young women aged 15–24 years are twice as likely to be living with HIV than men.

More than one third (35%) of women around the world have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at some time in their lives. In some regions, women who experience violence are one and a half times more likely to become infected with HIV.

The reduction in new HIV infections has been strongest in the region most affected by HIV, East and Southern Africa, where new HIV infections have been reduced by 30% since 2010. However, new HIV infections are rising in around 50 countries. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia the annual number of new HIV infections has doubled, and new HIV infections have increased by more than a quarter in the Middle East and North Africa over the past 20 years.

Moreover, despite the progress made across the 69 countries which have witnessed a decline in new infections, progress in combating viral transmission is still not happening fast enough to meet global targets.

We are sounding the alarm. Entire regions are falling behind, the huge gains we made for children are not being sustained, women are still most affected and key populations continue to be ignored. All these elements are halting progress and urgently need to be addressed head on.

- Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS
Treatment

Despite challenges, new global efforts have meant that the number of people receiving HIV treatment has increased dramatically in recent years, particularly in resource-poor countries.

In 2017, 59% of all people living with HIV were accessing treatment. Of those, 47% were virally suppressed.

In 2017, 21.7 million people living with HIV were receiving antiretroviral treatment (ART) – an increase of 2.3 million since 2016 and up from 8 million in 2010. However, this level of treatment scale up is still not enough for the world to meet its global target of 30 million people on treatment by 2020.9

Significant progress has been made in the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT). In 2017, 80% of all pregnant women living with HIV had access to treatment to prevent HIV transmission to their babies – this is up from 47% in 2010.10 11
HIV and tuberculosis (TB)

Tuberculosis (TB) remains the leading cause of death among people living with HIV, accounting for around one in three AIDS-related deaths. In 2016, 10.4 million people developed TB; of those 1.2 million were living with HIV.

Funding

At the end of 2017, US$ 21.3 billion was available for the AIDS response in low- and middle-income countries. This was a slight increase from the US$19 billion in global funding available in 2016. Around 56% of the total resources for HIV in low- and middle-income countries in 2017 were from domestic sources.

UNAIDS estimates that US$ 26.2 billion will be required for the AIDS response in 2020.

We live in fragile times, where gains can be easily reversed. The biggest challenge to moving forward is complacency.

Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS

- 1. UNAIDS (2018) AIDSinfo.unaids.org
• 4. UNAIDS (2018) AIDSinfo.unaids.org
• 5. ibid
• 6. ibid
• 7. ibid
• 8. ibid
• 9. ibid
• 10. ibid
• 11. UNAIDS (2017) 'Ending AIDS: Progress towards the 90-90-90 targets'

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