HIV and AIDS in East and Southern Africa

HIV and AIDS in Africa continue to be long-term development challenges. East Africa and southern Africa are the regions hardest hit by HIV.

There has been considerable political and financial commitment to fighting the epidemic in this region, with some countries such as South Africa and Kenya seeing dramatic scaling up of prevention, treatment and care services.

However, many countries in this region are still reliant on donor funding to finance their HIV response.

Find out more about HIV and AIDS in West and Central Africa.

Last full review: 24 April 2017
Next full review: 24 April 2019

East and Southern Africa is the region most affected by HIV in the world and is home to the largest number of people living with HIV.

East and Southern Africa regional overview

Botswana has made great progress in reducing HIV prevalence through the provision of universal free antiretroviral treatment.

Kenya has the joint fourth largest HIV epidemic in the world but has been a pioneer in HIV prevention, including VMMC, PrEP and self-testing.
Lesotho has one of the highest HIV prevalences in the world, but treatment coverage remains inadequate.

Over the past decade, new HIV infections have dropped significantly in Malawi. However, young people remain a concern.

Despite having the world's biggest HIV epidemic, South Africa is making good progress towards the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets, particularly in regards to testing.

Eswatini HIV statistics. Eswatini has the highest HIV prevalence in the world, linked to poverty, gender inequality and cultural beliefs that discourage safer sex.

In Tanzania, the HIV epidemic has remained steady due to ongoing new infections, population growth and increased access to treatment.

Treatment programmes have been scaled up in Uganda, but access remains low. Punitive laws also act as barriers to HIV services.
Unprotected heterosexual sex and mother-to-child transmission are the primary modes of HIV infection in Zambia.

Zimbabwe has a high HIV prevalence, with unprotected heterosexual sex continuing to be the main route transmission route for new infections.