

Media Update

26 July 2018

United Nations

Statement

Statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on Pakistan

25 July 2018

The Secretary-General condemns the suicide attack at a polling station in Quetta claimed by Da'esh. He extends his heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government and people of Pakistan. The United Nations stands in solidarity with and supports the efforts of the Government of Pakistan in the fight against terrorism.

Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General

UNICEF

Press Release

Every three minutes a teenage girl is infected by HIV – UNICEF

Teenage girls bear brunt of a far-from-over HIV/AIDS epidemic

AMSTERDAM/NEW YORK, 25 July 2018 – Around 30 teenagers aged 15 to 19 were newly infected with HIV per hour in 2017, according to a new [UNICEF report](#). Of these, two-thirds were girls.

“This is a crisis of health as well as a crisis of agency,” said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore. “In most countries, women and girls lack access to information, to services, or even just the power to say no to unsafe



sex. HIV thrives among the most vulnerable and marginalized, leaving teenage girls at the centre of the crisis.”

Women: At the heart of the HIV response for children offers sobering statistics on the continuing global AIDS epidemic and its impact on the most vulnerable. Last year, 130,000 children and adolescents 19 and under died from AIDS, while 430,000 – almost 50 an hour – were newly infected.

Presented at the International AIDS Conference taking place this week in Amsterdam, the report says that adolescents continue to bear the brunt of the epidemic and that failure to reach them is slowing down the progress the world has made in the last two decades in tackling the AIDS epidemic. The report notes that:

- Adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19 account for almost two thirds of the 3 million 0-19 year-olds living with HIV.
- Even while deaths for all other age groups, including adults, have been decreasing since 2010, deaths among older adolescents (15-19) have seen no reduction.
- Some 1.2 million 15-19 year-olds were living with HIV in 2017 – 3 out of 5 of them girls. The epidemic’s spread among adolescent girls is being fuelled by early sex, including with older males, forced sex, powerlessness in negotiating around sex, poverty and lack of access to confidential counselling and testing services.

“We need to make girls and women secure enough economically that they don’t have to turn to sex work. We need to make sure they have the right information about how HIV is transmitted and how to protect themselves,” said Angelique Kidjo, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, in an essay featured in the report. “And, of course, we need to make sure they have access to any services or medicines they need to keep healthy. Above all, we need to foster girls’ and women’s empowerment – and education is again often the best route to that.”

To help curb the spread of the epidemic, UNICEF – working closely with UNAIDS and other partners – launched a number of initiatives including:

- “All In to End Adolescent AIDS”, which aims to reach adolescents in 25 priority countries home to the world’s highest number of adolescents living with HIV.

- “Start Free, Live Free, AIDS Free”, a framework aimed at reducing the number of new HIV infections among adolescents and young women to less than 100,000 by 2020.
- The HIV Prevention 2020 Road Map, an action plan to speed up HIV prevention by focusing on structural barriers – like punitive laws and lack of adequate services – and highlights the role of communities.

These initiatives, and others before them, have led to significant success in preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV, according to the report. The number of new infections among children aged 0-4 dropped by one third between 2010 and 2017. Now 4 out of 5 pregnant women living with HIV are accessing treatment to keep them healthy and reduce the risk of transmission to their babies.

For example, in the Southern Africa region, long the epicentre of the AIDS crisis, Botswana and South Africa now have rates of mother to child transmission of only 5 per cent, and over 90 per cent of women with HIV are on effective HIV treatment regimens. Close to 100 per cent of pregnant women in Zimbabwe, Malawi and Zambia know their HIV status.

“Women are the most affected by this epidemic – both in the number of infections and as chief caregivers for those with the disease – and should continue to be at the forefront of the fight against it,” Fore said. “The fight is far from over.”

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Note to Editors:

The report features 17 essays highlighting women’s contributions to the fight against AIDS. Essayists include Graça Machel, former first lady of both Mozambique and South Africa; UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and singer Angelique Kidjo; Princess Mabel van Oranje; political, corporate and UN leaders; and young HIV/AIDS activists living with the virus.

[Download](#) Report and multimedia content including photos and b-roll

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UNICEF works in some of the world’s toughest places, to reach the world’s most disadvantaged children. Across 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone.



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