

World AIDS Day

1 December 2009

World AIDS Day is observed every year on December 1st by the World for World Organization (WFWO). The World AIDS Day provides governments, national AIDS programs, faith organizations, community organizations, and individuals with an opportunity to raise awareness and focus attention on the global AIDS epidemic. World AIDS Day is an opportunity to remember those we have lost to the pandemic and to resolve anew our battle against this deadly killer. In this context the WFWO stand up the World AIDS Day Campaign 2009 to fight again the HIV/AIDS and to raise awareness by organising special event focusing on global AIDS epidemic.

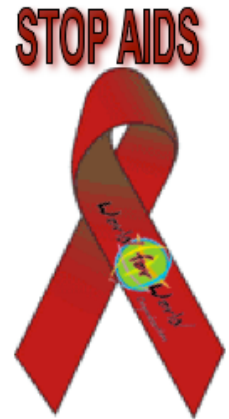
On this World AIDS Day 2009, we are filled with both hope and concern. Hope because significant progress has been made towards universal access. New HIV infections have dropped. Fewer children are born with HIV. And more than 4 million people are on treatment. Concern because 28 years into the epidemic the virus continues to make inroads into new populations; stigma and discrimination continue to undermine efforts to turn back the epidemic. The violation of human rights of people living with HIV, women and girls, men who have sex with men, injecting drug users and sex workers must end.

The World Health Organization announced recently that HIV/AIDS is the number one cause of disease and death among women ages 18-49 worldwide. AIDS has already taken the lives of 25 million people and 33 million more are estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS around the world today.

Today this infection rates rise, the public's level of awareness of their very real risk for contracting HIV wanes. We have a funding crisis for HIV/AIDS worldwide. Even the current budgeted relief programs come nowhere close to meeting the need we have to get those who require treatment into care. And stigma continues to prove as deadly as the disease itself, keeping people from getting tested and treated for HIV/AIDS.

We have far too many people incarcerated who are not getting adequate care for HIV/AIDS or access to condoms and the rise of the number and severity of cases of people being criminalized for HIV is alarming. In 2009, WFWO response to this call by supporting a special prevention program to children in Africa. An non-disclosure of HIV/AIDS became grounds for first degree murder and the virus has been considered a "bioterror weapon" by a Midwestern court.

Today, over 41 million people are living with HIV/AIDS. To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases is one of the [Millennium Development Goals](#) which all 191 United Nations Member States have pledged to meet by the year 2015. We can eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV. We can empower young people to protect themselves from HIV. We can stop violence against women and girls. We can protect drug users from becoming infected with HIV. And we can reduce sexual transmission of HIV. Gains made today are fragile and must be sustained. The economic crisis should not be a reason for reducing investments in health. Economic adjustments must be made through a human rights lens that keeps the focus on those most vulnerable. This is the time to increase rather than decrease funding for AIDS. AIDS provides a powerful mechanism for creating integrated health, human rights and development programmes. We must take AIDS out of isolation and create a broad social movement that will accelerate progress toward the Millennium Development Goals. World AIDS Day provides an opportunity for all of us – individuals, communities and political leaders – to take action towards making universal access a reality.



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called on “all countries to live up to their commitments to enact or enforce legislation outlawing discrimination against people living with HIV and members of vulnerable groups”. On this World AIDS Day, let us work urgently to remove punitive laws and practices and put an end to discrimination against and criminalization of people affected by HIV. On World AIDS Day let us also act on HIV prevention. For every two people put on treatment, five are newly infected. Too often prevention programmes are not reaching those most in need.

Resource from United Nations

WFWO's Communications Team