

The Ministry of Public Health celebrated World AIDS Day on 2 December 2012 in Kabul with the theme of “Take an HIV Test, Know Better, Live Better”.

In her speech Dr Suraya Dalil, Minister of Public Health, highlighted the challenges facing Afghanistan in its efforts to control the HIV epidemic. She noted that three decades of war, combined with poverty, uncontrolled open borders, economic problems, low literacy rate, immigration, unsafe injections and blood transfusion, drug cultivation and smuggling and the existence of around one million drug users, out of which 20 000 were injecting drug users, were the major factors bringing together the Ministry and its partners for prevention of HIV/AIDS and related deaths in Afghanistan.

Dr Sayed Karam Shah, WHO’s Medical Officer said, “In spite the increased commitment to strengthening surveillance and reinforcing prevention, treatment and care efforts, we are not able to reach all the people who need HIV treatment and care. The main contributor to this treatment crisis is the low uptake of HIV testing and counselling services”.

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