

1 December 2017 – On World AIDS Day, WHO is calling attention to the world and Sudan's commitment to ending AIDS by 2030, as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Early detection and frequent and responsible testing for HIV are among the key interventions highlighted in [the statement of Dr. Jaouad Mahjour, Acting Regional Director, WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region](#)

Dr. Mahjour states: "Today we are better equipped than ever for moving forward. We have a wealth of evidence-based interventions and tools that enable us to broaden prevention options, simplify diagnosis, optimize treatment and save lives. All we need to do is to put these interventions and tools within the reach of people who need them."

Ending AIDS by 2030 is one of the Sustainable Development Goals that countries have endorsed and committed to across the world. In this respect, the Eastern Mediterranean Region and Sudan have witnessed progress in HIV surveillance, prevention, treatment and care. Between 2012 and 2016 the number of people living with HIV receiving antiretroviral treatment increased steadily to more than double in number.

Dr. Naeema Al Gasseer, WHO Representative for Sudan, adds: "We have made a lot of progress, but many challenges also still remain. In Sudan, improving the quality and completeness of the HIV strategic information system with a special focus on electronic patient monitoring is a priority, as is improving coverage of most-at-risk populations with preventive and treatment services and improving knowledge about other key populations and arranging the necessary coverage with preventive and treatment services." For Sudan, scaling up the cascading steps of prevention, care and treatment are among the key priorities, which are also included in the new National Strategic Plan (2018-2020).

In the region, in spite of progress, the epidemic is still growing. It features the lowest coverage of HIV prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care services in the world. Eighty-five per cent (85%) of people living with HIV in the region and who need life-saving antiretroviral therapy do not receive it.

For Sudan and the region both, HIV prevention remains a priority, particularly among key populations at risk of HIV. HIV testing services constitute an essential part of the HIV prevention package. People at risk who test negative for HIV can use a wide range of HIV prevention

services which are available to help them maintain a life without HIV.

In Sudan, scaling up prevention, care and treatment have very specific objectives and targets. For prevention, this includes targeting HIV prevention at key high risk populations, including testing among TB, STI and hospital inpatients, improving antenatal care and early infant diagnosis (EID), and HIV partner notification services to increase the number of people who know their status. For HIV care and treatment, this means expanding active referral and decentralization of treatment outlets, full implementation of policies to treat all patients, adherence support services, differentiated care and treatment, and improving patient monitoring through viral load testing.

Finally, Sudan health partners will work to reduce HIV stigma and discrimination in health care settings, improving quality of services, ensuring the accessibility of HIV and sexually transmitted diseases prevention and treatment services in humanitarian settings, strengthening HIV strategic information, creating conducive environment for prevention and treatment services, and ensuring enough financing for the HIV response.

#### **Related link**

[World AIDS Day campaign page](#)

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