

# Preventing HIV/AIDS



**UNFPA**

United Nations  
Population Fund

**FACT SHEET**

## PROMOTING REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SAVING WOMEN'S LIVES

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### Overview

In the wake of the June 2001 United Nations Special Session on HIV/AIDS, world attention centered on the Secretary General's call for a special Global AIDS and Health Fund of US \$7-10 billion per year to combat the pandemic. But this Fund is only one crucial part of an adequate response.

At the end of 2001, 40 million people were living with HIV/AIDS: of these, 72 percent of the adults and 90 percent of the children live in Africa,<sup>1</sup> where AIDS last year killed ten times more people than did armed conflict.

*“The Special Session on HIV/AIDS has agreed on what needs to be done to prevent the further spread of infection, and how to do it. Now the task is to translate the Declaration into concrete actions in each country and community. UNFPA is dedicated to that task. We come from a wide spectrum of cultural backgrounds and differences of approach, but we are committed to one purpose—saving people’s lives.”*

—Dr. Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director  
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

In sub-Saharan Africa, AIDS is now the leading cause of death. It is destabilizing societies socially, economically and politically, with heavily affected countries expected to lose 20 percent of their gross domestic product by 2020.<sup>3</sup> And every day, 14,000 more people become infected with HIV/AIDS—almost ten people per minute. In 2001, 3.4 million new infections were in Africa.<sup>1</sup>

### **How can this awful trend be halted?**

Funding and effort now must focus simultaneously on three areas that the UN Population Fund calls the continuum of care.

### **Continuum of Care:**

- Prevention of infection and spread of the virus, especially to infants, through programmes of sexual and reproductive health and efforts to promote gender equality, especially for young people, and to involve men;
- Treatment for AIDS victims, including capacity-building in affected areas; and
- Care for the affected families, especially orphans.

For these three things to happen, leadership is required—advocacy to create policy change, to spur research on vaccines, cures and new methods of prevention, and to forge institutional action.

The UN Population Fund works to assure a comprehensive approach to the disease at every level—from affected individuals through their families and communities to the national and international forums where health care policies are made and funded.

—**March 2002**

1. UNAIDS, WHO, *AIDS Epidemic Update, December 2001*, UNAIDS, Geneva, 2001

2. UN Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2001* UNDP, New York, 2001, p. 154

3. UN Department of Public Information, *Fact Sheets: United Nations Special Session on HIV/AIDS*, New York, 2001, p. 5