

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON WORLD AIDS DAY

1 December 2015

This year, we mark World AIDS Day with new hope. I applaud the staunch advocacy of activists. I commend the persistent efforts of health workers. And I pay tribute to the principled stance of human rights defenders and the courage of all those who have joined forces to fight for global progress against the disease.

World leaders have unanimously committed to ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals adopted in September. This commitment reflects the power of solidarity to forge, from a destructive disease, one of the most inclusive movements in modern history.

We have a lot to learn from the AIDS response. One by one people stood up for science, human rights and the empowerment of all those living with HIV. And this is how we will end the epidemic: by moving forward together.

The window of opportunity to act is closing. That is why I am calling for a Fast-Track approach to front-load investments and close the gap between needs and services.

To break the epidemic and prevent it from rebounding, we must act on all fronts. We need to more than double the number of people on life-changing treatment to reach all 37 million of those living with HIV. We need to provide adolescent girls and young women with access to education and real options to protect themselves from HIV. And we need to provide key populations with full access to services delivered with dignity and respect.

Every child can be born free from HIV to mothers who not only survive but thrive. Ending AIDS is essential to the success of Every Woman Every Child and the Global Strategy I launched to ensure the health and well-being of women, children and adolescents within a generation.

Reaching the Fast-Track Targets will prevent new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths while eliminating HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

I look forward to the 2016 High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on AIDS as a critical chance for the world to commit to Fast-Track the end of AIDS.

On this World AIDS Day, let us pay tribute to all those who have lost their lives to this disease by renewing our resolve to stand for justice, access and greater hope around the world.