



HOPING and COPING

A Call for Action

The Capacity Challenge of HIV/AIDS
in Least Developed Countries





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Matters of Fact

In the one minute that it takes to read these facts, 10 more people will become HIV-positive. AIDS has killed more than 23 million people worldwide. In 2004 alone, more than 3 million people died, and nearly 5 million became HIV-positive.

Less than 12% of those who need treatment in developing countries receive it. In 2000, patented antiretroviral treatment ranged from US \$10,000–\$15,000 per patient per year. Today, generic medicines can cost as little as US \$140.

HIV/AIDS is a global epidemic—in 54 countries at least 1% of adults are living with HIV/AIDS, and in 27 countries prevalence rates exceed 4%. Nine out of the 10 countries with the highest prevalence are in Southern Africa. Sixteen out of the 27 countries with an adult prevalence rate higher than 4% are Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The prevalence of HIV in the least developed countries is 9 times that of the more developed regions.

Ten years ago, women worldwide made up 38% of people with HIV—now, close to half of adults living with HIV are women. In sub-Saharan Africa nearly six in 10 HIV-positive adults are women. Young women, aged 15–24, are twice as likely to become HIV-positive as men of the same age.

Today, 39.4 million people are living with HIV/AIDS: 25.4 million in sub-Saharan Africa, 7.1 million in South and South-East Asia, 1.7 million in Latin America, 1.4 million in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 1.1 million in East Asia, 1 million in North America, 0.6 million in Western Europe, 0.5 million in North Africa and the Middle East, 0.4 million in the Caribbean and 35,000 in Oceania.

Sources: *Report on the Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic 2004*; *UNAIDS Fact Sheets*; *AIDS epidemic update December 2004* (UNAIDS); *Human Development Report 2004* (UNDP); *World population monitoring, focusing on population, development and HIV/AIDS, with particular emphasis on poverty*, United Nations, 2004.



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

PREFACE

HOPING & COPING: A CALL FOR ACTION

THE CAPACITY CHALLENGE OF HIV/AIDS

IN LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

July 2005

The problem of capacity, both human and institutional, has long been one of the most pressing issues facing the development community. Among the most vulnerable people in the world are those who live in the Least Developed Countries. They endure economic and natural disasters; they are often subject to political upheaval or armed conflict; they are at greater risk of infectious disease; they have limited access to education, health care and other services. For them, capacity development is an even greater challenge than in the rest of the developing world.

Now, the already overstretched and limited resources of the Least Developed Countries are being eroded by the spread of HIV/AIDS. Of nearly 40 million people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide, 11 million are in Least Developed Countries. More than 25 of these countries have HIV/AIDS prevalence rates higher than 1 per cent; 16 have prevalence rates above four percent; and five have prevalence rates above 12 percent.

This Call for Action, issued jointly by the Office of the United Nations High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and the Small Island Developing States and the United Nations Development Programme, describes the effects of HIV/AIDS on the poorest and most vulnerable segment of the world community. It sets out the plight of the nations that are bearing the brunt of the worst epidemic in human history, while having the least capacity to deal with the immense challenges it presents. More than 700 million women, men, and children live in Least Developed Countries with the spectre of AIDS threatening to unravel the development gains they have painstakingly made. Their predicament, which they

confront with courage, tenacity and innovative approaches, calls for urgent attention and action -- now and in the long-term. Only if we address the linked challenges of building capacity and fighting AIDS can we reach the Millennium Development Goals. Only then can we succeed in our other efforts to build a humane, healthy and equitable world.

Kofi A. Annan

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