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Fact sheet

Progress in scaling up access to HIV treatment in low and middle-income countries, June 2006

Number of people receiving treatment

WHO estimates that as of June 2006, more than 1.6 million persons were accessing antiretroviral therapy in low- and middle-income countries (see Table 1). This represents more than a four-fold increase since December 2003, when global efforts to expand access to antiretroviral therapy began to increase significantly. Overall, antiretroviral therapy coverage in these countries increased from 7 percent at the end of 2003 to 24 percent in June 2006. Of the 38.6 million people living with HIV worldwide, approximately 6.8 million in low- and middle-income countries are now estimated to require antiretroviral therapy. Over the past year, the number of people receiving treatment in these countries increased by about 300 000 every six months.

Scale up in sub-Saharan Africa has been most dramatic, increasing from 100 000 people receiving treatment at the end of 2003 to over one million in June 2006, representing a 10-fold increase. Sixty-three percent of all people now receiving treatment in low- and middle-income countries are living in sub-Saharan Africa, compared to 25 percent in late 2003.

By June 2006, data reported from countries in sub-Saharan African, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean indicated that 20 countries (with at least 1000 people needing antiretroviral therapy) are providing treatment to at least 50 percent of people who need it (see Figure 1). The four most recent countries to achieve this level are Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay and Rwanda.

Regional coverage and major trends

Coverage by region ranges from 5 percent in North Africa and the Middle East, and 13 percent in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, to 75 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean. Sub-Saharan Africa has the second highest percentage coverage after Latin America and the Caribbean, however the region still accounts for 70 percent of unmet treatment need in low- and middle-income countries.

Although 76 percent of those in need in low and middle-income countries still remain untreated, trends in scale-up have nevertheless been encouraging in the areas with the most HIV-infected persons.

In **sub-Saharan Africa**, more than a million people are now on treatment, a 10-fold increase since December 2003. Coverage has risen to 23 percent from just two percent

in 2003. In **East, South and South-East Asia**, 235 000 people are now on treatment up from 70 000 at the end of 2003, representing a more than three-fold increase.

In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, the number of people receiving treatment has increased gradually to 345 000 people, up from 210 000 at the end of 2003. Estimated coverage is now 75 percent. In the low- and middle-income countries in **Europe and Central Asia** and in **North Africa and the Middle East**, progress has been less significant. Some 24 000 people in Europe and Central Asia are receiving treatment as compared to 15 000 at the end of 2003. In North Africa and the Middle East, 4000 people are estimated to be on treatment, as compared to 1000 at the end of 2003.

Data suggest no systematic bias against women

In most settings, including in sub-Saharan Africa, the proportion of ART recipients who are women corresponds closely to the proportion infected, and in some settings exceeds the proportion expected. However, this is not true in all countries and data do not yet allow for generalizations about other aspects of access, quality of care, and support for women.

Scale-up is leaving children behind

An estimated 800 000 children below the age of 15 now require antiretroviral therapy but only 60 000 - 100 000 are on treatment. Children account for approximately 14 percent of AIDS deaths. Nearly 90 percent of children with HIV are African. The median proportion of children on HIV treatment is just 8 percent in both sub-Saharan Africa, and generally in low- and middle-income countries (see Figure 2).

Prevention of mother-to-child transmission is completely inadequate

Less than one in ten HIV-infected pregnant women in low- and middle-income countries are benefiting from antiretroviral prophylaxis, despite the successes of certain countries such as Botswana, Brazil, and Thailand, and the virtual elimination of pediatric HIV disease in the industrialized world.

Inequity of treatment for injecting drug users

In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, injecting drug users, account for over 70 percent of HIV-positive persons and of treatment need. However, only about a quarter of treatment recipients in this region are drug injectors.

For more information, please contact:

WHO

Anne Winter, WHO: tel: +41 79 440 6011, email: wintera@who.int

Cathy Bartley, WHO, tel: +44 7958 561 671, email: cathy.bartley@ukonline.co.uk

Iqbal Nandra, WHO, tel: +41 22 791 5589, mobile phone: +41 79 509 0622,
email: nandrai@who.int

Tunga Namjilsuren, WHO, tel: +41 22 791 1073, email: namjilsurent@who.int

UNAIDS

Sophie Barton-Knott, tel: +41 22 791 1697, mobile phone: +41 79 472 7917, email:
bartonknotts@unaids.org

All information on WHO events and activities at the XVI International AIDS Conference in Toronto, Canada can be obtained from the webpage: <http://www.who.int/hiv/toronto2006>. All WHO press releases, fact sheets, features and other information can be found on <http://www.who.int>.

Table 1. Estimated number of people receiving antiretroviral therapy, people needing antiretroviral therapy, and percentage coverage in low- and middle-income countries according to region, December 2003–June 2006^a

Geographical region	Estimated number of people receiving antiretroviral therapy, June 2006 (low estimate–high estimate)^b	Estimated number of people needing antiretroviral therapy, 2005 (low estimate–high estimate)^a	Antiretroviral therapy coverage, June 2006 (%)	Estimated number of people receiving antiretroviral therapy, December 2005 (low estimate–high estimate)^b	Estimated number of people receiving antiretroviral therapy, December 2003 (low estimate–high estimate)^b
Sub-Saharan Africa	1 040 000 [930 000–1 150 000]	4 600 000 [4 000 000–5 400 000]	23%	810 000 [730 000–890 000]	100 000 [75 000–125 000]
Latin America and the Caribbean	345 000 [260 000–430 000]	460 000 [350 000–600 000]	75%	315 000 [295 000–335 000]	210 000 [160 000–260 000]
East, South and South-East Asia	235 000 [180 000–290 000]	1 440 000 [970 000–2 000 000]	16%	180 000 [150 000–210 000]	70 000 [52 000–88 000]
Europe and Central Asia	24 000 [23 000–25 000]	190 000 [130 000–260 000]	13%	21 000 [20 000–22 000]	15 000 [11 000–19 000]
North Africa and the Middle East	4 000 [3 000–5 000]	75 000 [43 000–120 000]	5%	4 000 [3 000–5 000]	1 000 [750–1 250]
Total	1 650 000 [1 400 000–1 900 000]	6 800 000 [5 800 000–8 000 000]	24%	1 330 000 [1 200 000–1 460 000]	400 000 [300 000–500 000]

Note: some numbers do not add up due to rounding.

^aFor an explanation of the methods used, see Progress on global access to HIV antiretroviral therapy: a report on "3 by 5" and beyond. WHO and UNAIDS, 2006.

^bData on children - when available - are included.

Figure 1. 20 low- and middle-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean treated more than 50% of those in need, June 2006^a



Only countries with an ART need of 1000 or more are included on this map.

^aEven though more people are receiving treatment in Uganda compared to December 2005 (WHO/UNAIDS *Progress on Global Access to HIV Antiretroviral Therapy - a report on "3 by 5" and beyond*, March 2006), coverage is lower than estimated 6 months ago, i.e. less than 50%. This is because the estimated number of people in need of treatment has been revised upwardly in line with an overall upward adjustment of the size of the epidemic in Uganda.

Figure 2. Percentage of people on treatment who are children, June 2006

