

UN hails landmark pricing deal for faster rollout of 'game-changing' HIV treatment

21 September 2017 – Senior United Nations officials today welcomed a breakthrough pricing agreement by global partners to accelerate the availability in low- and middle-income countries of the first affordable, generic, single-pill HIV treatment regimen.

“What we are talking about today with this life-changing announcement is about the quality of medicine, is about equity, is about the dignity, is about access to medicine as a human right,” Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS ([UNAIDS](#)), told a press conference at UN Headquarters.

The pricing agreement, he explained, will help ensure that the treatment will be made available to 92 countries, and people there will be able to benefit from “one of the best medicines we have” for first-line treatment.

At around \$75 per person per year, the HIV treatment regimen containing dolutegravir (DTG) will be available to public-sector purchasers in these countries.

The agreement is expected to accelerate treatment rollout as part of global efforts to reach all 36.7 million people living with HIV with high-quality antiretroviral therapy. UNAIDS estimates that in 2016, 19.5 million – or just over half of all people living with HIV – had access to the life-saving medicines.

DTG, a best-in-class integrase inhibitor, is widely used in high-income countries and is recommended by the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) as an alternative first-line HIV regimen. It is also a preferred treatment by the United States Department of Health and Human Services Panel on Antiretroviral Guidelines for Adults and Adolescents, among others.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom also [welcomed](#) the agreement, stating that “this will save lives for the most vulnerable, bringing the world closer to the elimination of HIV [...] WHO will support countries in the safe introduction and a swift transition to this game-changing new treatment.”

The agreement was announced by the Governments of South Africa and Kenya, together with UNAIDS and many other partners.

Earlier today, during an event entitled “Fast-Track: Quickening the pace of action to end AIDS” held on the sidelines of the General Assembly, Mr. Sidibé called on world leaders to maintain “global solidarity” to end AIDS.

UNAIDS leads global efforts to achieve its shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.

[‘We are in it together,’ Ghana tells UN Assembly, reaffirming Global Goals for planet and people](#)

21 September 2017 – While sceptics feared the landmark Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) were “too many and too complex” to be tackled, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of Ghana told the United Nations today that the Organization’s experience has proved that “once the world puts its collective mind to something, the chances are, we would get it right.”

Addressing delegations at the General Assembly’s general debate, he underscored that the recent devastation caused by floods in the United States, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Dominica, Puerto Rico, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Martin and Niger was a reminder that as inhabitants of this planet, “we are in it together,” at the mercy of nature.

Mr. Akufo-Addo said he was speaking today because of elections that voted out an incumbent Government. “We continue to be a beacon of democracy and stability on the continent, our institutions of State are growing stronger, and we have made more progress with our economy than at any time since independence,” he said. While Ghana has made strides towards the [SDGs](#), he said that it continues to grow its economy and open up opportunities for all Ghanaians.

Turning to Africa’s commitment to remaining a nuclear weapon-free continent, Mr. Akufo-Addo explained that three weeks ago, highly-enriched uranium was flown out of Ghana back to China, “signalling the end of the removal of all such material from the country.” He underscored: “A world, free of nuclear weapons, must be in all our collective interest.”

Drawing attention to UN reform, Ghana zeroed-in on “the longstanding injustice” that the Security Council’s current composition represents for African nations. “We cannot continue to preach democracy and fairness around the world, we cannot insist on peace and justice around the world, when our global organisation is [...] seen by many as helping to perpetuate an unfair world order,” stressed Mr. Akufo-Addo.

[Full statement available here](#)

Countering extremism in Middle East requires socio-economic measures, Lebanese leader tells UN

21 September 2017 – Recalling the tragic 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States that sparked the global ‘war on terror’ – which has since “lost its way” – the President of Lebanon today told the United Nations that the while many Middle East had borne the brunt, terrorism has spread like wildfire to all continents and must be tackled at its roots.

“No one knows how far this terrorism will reach and how it will end,” Michel Aoun said in his address to the General Assembly’s annual debate. While Lebanon had been one of the phenomenon’s earliest targets, the Government has prevented anyone from crossing the “red line” of national security and stability. Indeed, despite terrorists’ abilities to organize in some towns and cities, Lebanon had been able to eliminate cells, as had recently been seen in its victories against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da’esh) along the border with Syria.

When the war began in Syria, he continued, Lebanon had been able to preserve its unity despite severe political divisions it was experiencing. “The Lebanese people have proven that they are humanitarian and responsible,” Mr. Aoun said noting that they had welcomed Syrian refugees, sharing food, schools and other resources with them.

Nevertheless, waves of displacement and refugees had increased Lebanon’s population by 50 per cent, he said, citing severe overcrowding, a deteriorating economic situation and increased crime. More dangerous was the fact that terrorists had taken shelter among the refugees, making the need to resettle displaced persons to their homelands urgent.

Mr. Aoun stressed that Lebanon distinguished between “voluntary” and “safe” return, based on the reasons for displacement. In cases of individual asylum for political reasons, political refugees would voluntarily decide when to return, with acceptance by the host country. Lebanon considers the collective asylum taking place in its territory – for economic and security reasons – as displacement, rather than asylum, as it had not received host country acceptance, and thus, constituted “population invasion.”

Noting that conflicts trapped the Middle East in poverty and turned it into a “hotbed of extremism,” he said any solution should be accompanied by economic and social measures aimed at achieving growth and improving social conditions for young people. He called on the UN to seriously consider establishing a “joint Eastern market.”

UN chief calls for 'meaningful' youth engagement in peace efforts, not just symbolism

21 September 2017 – Young people must be meaningful partners in conflict prevention and sustaining peace, and the United Nations should think outside the box on how to relate to youth globally, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres told a ministerial event held today on the margins of the General Assembly's annual debate.

"Young women and men and their contributions to peace should stand at the very core of what will become our new common approach," Mr. Guterres [said](#), explaining that he has set in motion reforms to rethink the UN's work on preventing war and sustaining peace.

The event, co-chaired by Jordan and Norway, was held in support of Security Council Resolution 2250, a ground-breaking resolution adopted in 2015 which recognizes that "young people play an important and positive role in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security."

Mr. Guterres noted that in today's uncertain and unsettling world, young people find themselves left out of decision-making and increasingly unemployed.

"We must do better in bridging these gaps and drawing on the enormous initiative, energy and ideas of the world's young people. We must make the most of the power of young women and men as drivers of a culture of peace," he said.

In a larger sense, the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, adopted by UN Member States in 2015, provides a tremendous foundation for action, he said, as it rightly defines young people as "critical agents of change" and as a priority across its 17 Goals.

"In all we do, our destination is clear: empowerment," he said. "We must commit to engaging young people fully – not as a symbol or to simply check a box. The goal must be meaningful participation."

In June, Mr. Guterres appointed Jayathma Wickramanayake as his Envoy on Youth to advance youth rights and priorities.

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