

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD AIDS DAY  
1 December 2008**

On this, twentieth World AIDS Day, we are at the dawn of a new era.

Fewer people are being infected with HIV. Fewer people are dying of AIDS.

This success owes itself to people all over the world who are taking the lead to stop AIDS. Governments are delivering on their promises to scale up universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.

But this is just the beginning. There is no room for complacency.

AIDS will not go away any time soon. People are still being infected with HIV faster than we can get them on treatment. AIDS is still one of the top ten causes of death worldwide, and it is the number one killer in Africa.

The challenge now is to sustain leadership. We have to build on what we have started. And we have to maintain this momentum.

We have to end the stigma and discrimination that still stop so many people from learning how to prevent HIV and get treatment. And we need resources -- enough to provide services that will have a real impact in communities and on entire nations.

The need to lead, empower and deliver on AIDS is as real and urgent as ever.

Recently I read about a Congolese woman living with HIV who received medicine through the United Nations. She is now part of a group called the "hope-givers team", which helps other families dealing with HIV.

On this World AIDS Day, let us all pledge to be "hope-givers" who offer encouragement and take action to create a future without AIDS.

Thank you very much.