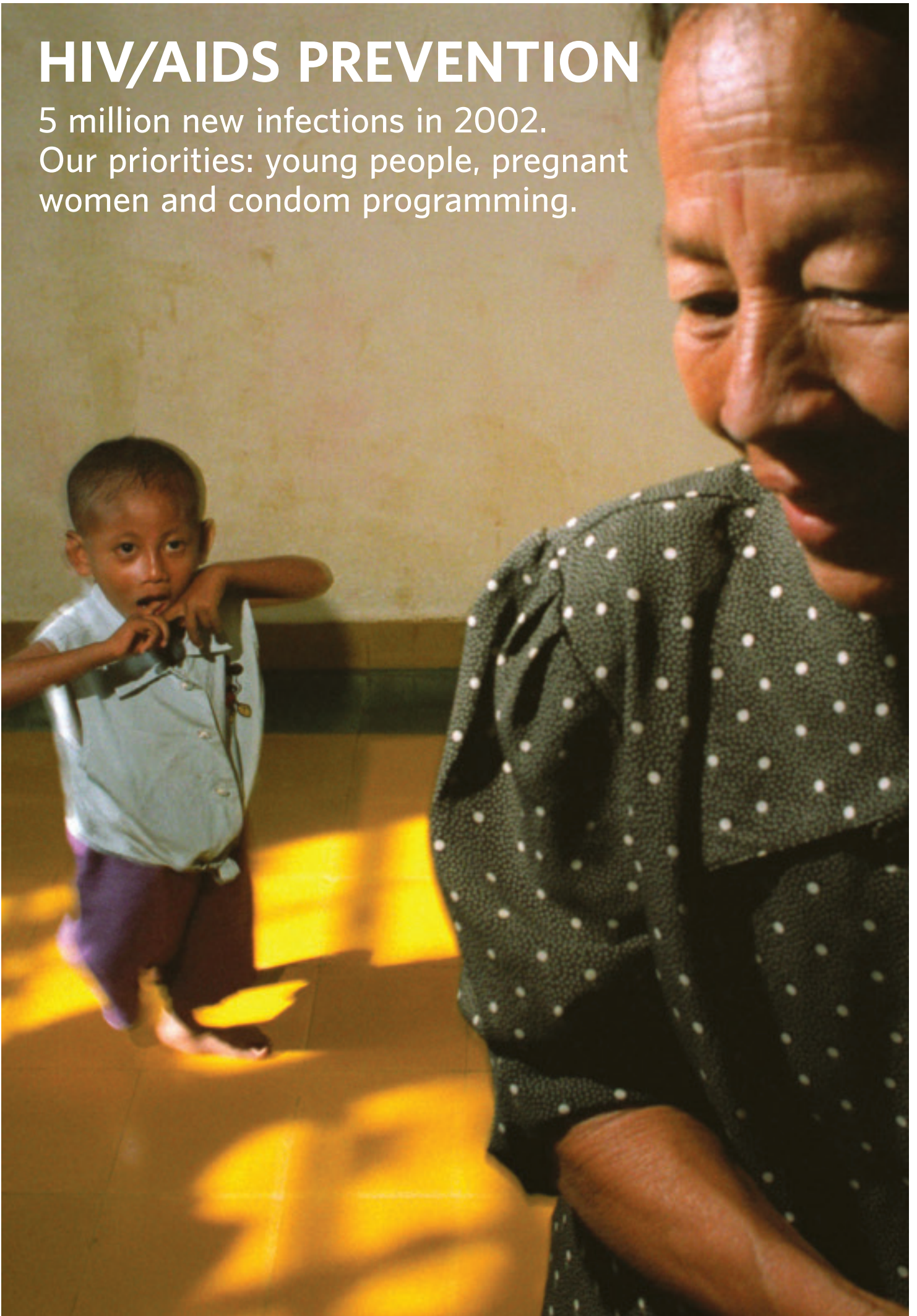


# HIV/AIDS PREVENTION

5 million new infections in 2002.  
Our priorities: young people, pregnant women and condom programming.



Five million people were newly infected with HIV in 2002—about 14,000 each day. A sense of urgency mounted as infections among women rose, a food crisis compounded the epidemic in Southern Africa, and the epidemic gained speed in other regions. Its impact continued to increase, with the worst yet to come. Already, HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa, and the fourth-biggest killer worldwide. UNFPA enhanced capacity to counter HIV/AIDS through action within the organization and with our many partners.

Nearly all of the reproductive health programmes supported by UNFPA worldwide now include interventions to prevent HIV infection. The focus is on HIV prevention among young people and pregnant women, and on condom programming. The Fund's longstanding efforts to reduce transmission of sexually transmitted infections have never been more urgent than in the era of HIV/AIDS.

Crisis situations add to this urgency, as in southern Africa where a food crisis and the AIDS epidemic emerged as a deadly combination. AIDS among farmers affected already low food supplies, and health suffered further with less nutrition available to meet the needs of people living with HIV/AIDS. Even more children were orphaned as AIDS deaths rose. UNFPA provided emergency reproductive health supplies and assisted in a coordinated UN response to the crisis.

## **ACTION AGAINST HIV/AIDS**

UNFPA intensified its internal commitment to HIV prevention while continuing to provide leadership based on decades of experience.

- UNFPA established an HIV/AIDS branch at its headquarters in New York, and a consultant on HIV/AIDS in the Workplace joined the Office of Human Resources.
- At the global level, UNFPA was designated as the UN convening agency for the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in the areas of young people and condom programming.
- At the regional level, a position dedicated to HIV/AIDS prevention programming was established in each of UNFPA's Country Technical Services Teams (CSTs), and the UNFPA strategic guidelines on HIV prevention were adapted to several regions.
- Two evaluations of HIV/AIDS activities were completed, including an internal thematic evaluation by UNFPA and a five-year UN evaluation of UNAIDS, of which UNFPA is a founding member.
- UNFPA's policy on HIV prevention was disseminated more widely with the publication of the *Strategic Guidance on HIV Prevention*, the staff series *HIV Prevention Now*, and *An Evaluation of UNFPA Support for Preventing the Spread of HIV/AIDS* (Evaluation Report #19).

## **EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY**

"Live and let live" was the slogan of the World AIDS Campaign 2002-2003, which focused on eliminating stigma and discrimination.

- More than 9,000 Muslim religious leaders in Bangladesh participated in training on gender, HIV/AIDS prevention and other reproductive health issues through a project of UNFPA and the Islamic Foundation in the Ministry of Religious Affairs.



A youth counselling service point in Sri Lanka, part of the joint EC/UNFPA Initiative for Reproductive Health in Asia, provides information on HIV/AIDS and other reproductive health issues.

*Photo: EC/UNFPA Initiative for RH*

A new publication, *Strategic Guidance on HIV Prevention*, explains how UNFPA's distinct set of capabilities, strengths and comparative advantages are contributing to its partnerships in the global response to HIV/AIDS. It outlines UNFPA policies and strategic priorities, and presents a framework for prevention among young people and pregnant women, and through condom programming.

- Peer educators in Eastern Europe and Central Asia are now electronically linked through the UNFPA-supported Youth Peer Education Electronic Resource ([www.youthpeer.com](http://www.youthpeer.com)). In 2002, this networking component of a regional initiative connected 370 trainers who, in turn, reached some 31,000 peer educators with information on adolescent health and safer sexual behaviour.

- The impact of HIV/AIDS on women was the central topic of the Fifth Conference of African Women Ministers and Parliamentarians in October in Cape Verde, organized by UNFPA and attended by more than 80 women ministers and parliamentarians and other leaders from sub-Saharan Africa.

## ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people can stop the pandemic. Their success requires commitment and action from all levels and sectors of society to ensure that adolescents and youth possess the knowledge, skills and the means to prevent HIV infection, protect their reproductive health and build a supportive environment free of stigma and discrimination.

- UNFPA and the OPEC Fund for International Development launched a new initiative in November 2002 to prevent HIV infection among young people, pregnant women and mobile populations in the Arab region, Central America and the Caribbean. The three-year, 13-country initiative supports training for teachers and outreach workers, data collection, NGO capacity building, and national efforts to detect and prevent infection.

- A computer game designed to educate young people about preventing sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, went online in 2002 at the web site of the Youth for Youth Foundation ([www.venerix.ro](http://www.venerix.ro)) in Romania. The site logged 134,875 visits during the year.

- Biology teachers in Turkmenistan received training about HIV prevention and other reproductive health concerns as part of a commitment by the Ministry of Education to implement a school programme for ninth-graders, developed with UNFPA assistance.

- Young actors in Kyrgyzstan performed a drama to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS. The story was of a college boy, Igor, infected during a blood test. The event presented youth-friendly information about HIV prevention and explored attitudes towards people living with HIV/AIDS.

## CONDOM PROGRAMMING

The correct and consistent use of condoms, both male and female, could provide millions of people with a simple and effective means to protect themselves and their sexual partners from HIV infection. But the challenges are significant: massive shortfalls in supply compared to current needs, frequent stockouts, and limited resources for programming to instil safer sexual behaviours.

- The UNFPA office in New York collected myths and misperceptions that hinder access to and use of condoms, and started an inventory of materials to support the process of expanding effective, successful interventions for young people.
- The Nigerian Government, working with the National Association of Nigerian Students, introduced a plan to distribute at least one billion condoms to its citizens over the next five years to slow the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- Railway staff in China participated in training on HIV prevention and marketing methods, and condom vending machines were installed in train stations in a project intended to reach migrant populations.
- Since 1999, more than 19 million female condoms have been supplied to several countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America through joint efforts of UNFPA, UNAIDS, WHO, The Female Health Company and national partners.

## GENDER AND PREVENTION

When men are viewed as part of the solution, the likelihood increases that both men and women will make informed, safe and consensual decisions regarding sexuality and reproduction, including prevention of HIV infection.

- Health promoters in Venezuela received training through a project that reaches poor women at their place of employment and at employment agencies. Training in 2002 covered HIV/AIDS, gender equity and other aspects of reproductive health and rights.
- In Cambodia, national strategic planning was influenced by the project AIDS Impact Model, in which workshops and information activities promote women's empowerment as part of HIV prevention.
- In Zimbabwe, a micro-credit finance scheme, training in business planning, and leadership courses on HIV/AIDS, gender and domestic violence empowered women to speak out and gain community support for HIV prevention.
- Students of the armed forces and national police in Peru studied reproductive health and rights when the course Sexual Health and Personal Development was introduced in 2002 as part of their regular training curricula.