



# Intensifying HIV Prevention

Scaling up proven approaches to achieve universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care.

Sustained HIV prevention programmes have played a key part in bringing down HIV infections in several countries, including Haiti, Kenya and Zimbabwe. But the stark reality is that, despite some gains, there were an additional five million infections in 2005, bringing the total number of people living with HIV worldwide to just over 40 million.

The new global focus is on universal access to prevention, treatment and care. World leaders at the 2005 World Summit affirmed this goal and the need to keep HIV/AIDS at the top of the global agenda. The United Nations system mobilized for an intensified response and called for rapidly scaled-up HIV prevention. UNFPA continued to move full speed ahead to link HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health policies and actions. This will help achieve universal access to reproductive health, as well as halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015—goal six of the MDGs.

## ACTION AGAINST HIV/AIDS

Worldwide, fewer than one in five people at risk of becoming infected with HIV have access to basic prevention services. Only one in ten people living with HIV have been tested and know their status.

- In a June report, the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination recommended a rapid scale-up of the AIDS response, based on national ownership, United Nations harmonization, and the “Three Ones” principles: one national AIDS coordinating authority, one national AIDS action plan, and one monitoring and evaluation system.
- In December, the European Union called for a massive scaling up of HIV prevention, stating that universal access to HIV prevention, care and treatment should be the world’s immediate goal. It also called for stronger linkages between HIV prevention and sexual and reproductive health, and that rights-based, evidence-informed strategies should underpin all HIV/AIDS prevention efforts.
- UNFPA leads the United Nations efforts to coordinate condom programming and HIV prevention among young people. A newly added responsibility in 2005 was UNFPA’s appointment as the lead United Nations agency to coordinate actions addressing issues surrounding HIV/AIDS and sex work. Efforts are harmonized through the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), and through United Nations theme groups on HIV/AIDS at the country level, chaired by UNFPA in many countries.
- UNFPA released a report by young people and hosted a dialogue among young people and representatives of government and civil society on the needs of the youth, during the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS on 2 June in New York. The report, *Our Voice, Our Future: Young People Report on Progress Made on the UNGASS Declaration of*

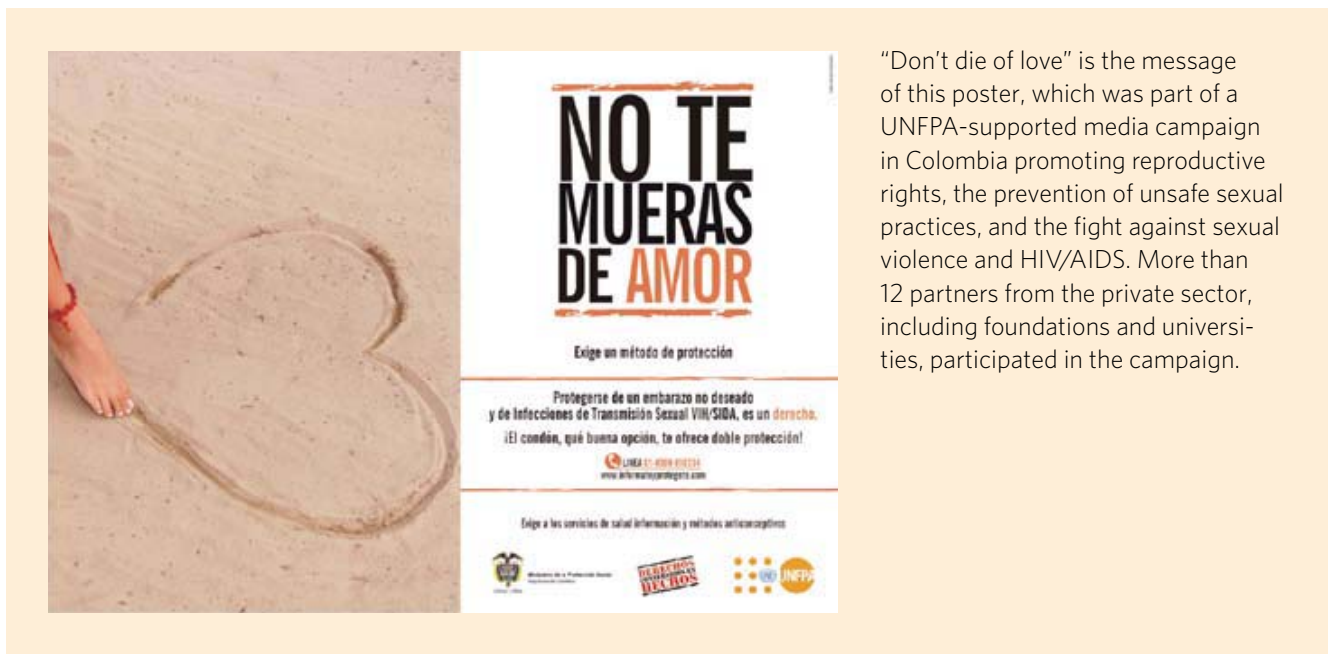
*Commitment on HIV/AIDS*, was prepared by members of the Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS, a youth-led alliance of over 1,000 youth leaders and adult allies, and Global Youth Partners, an advocacy campaign directed by young people in 29 countries.

- Of special interest in 2005 were the acknowledged linkages between HIV/AIDS and reproductive ill-health, which share root causes. The World Health Organization (WHO), the International Planned Parenthood Federation, UNAIDS and UNFPA published guidelines on priority linkages for policy and programme actions.
- UNFPA launched a three-year project among refugees, displaced populations and their host communities in the post-conflict border areas of Guinea, Liberia, Côte d’Ivoire and Sierra Leone. Partners in the \$7.5 million project to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and other STIs include the national AIDS secretariats, WHO, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, the African Development Bank, the Mano River Union Secretariat and NGOs.

## WOMEN AND AIDS

Women are the fastest-growing group among the newly infected—with young women at highest risk. At least 48 per cent of all adults living with HIV in 2005 were women, up from 35 per cent in 1985.

- UNFPA, WHO, UNICEF and other partners strengthened collaboration to carry out a comprehensive strategy on prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT). The December 2005 “Abuja Call to Action: Towards an HIV-free and AIDS-free Generation” notes that comprehensive PMTCT programmes should include strategies to: prevent HIV transmission to women; provide reproductive



health care to women living with HIV; prevent HIV transmission during pregnancy, labour and delivery; and minimize HIV transmission through safer infant feeding practices.

- Young women at the Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, gained access to a female-only reading room when UNFPA launched an HIV/AIDS and reproductive health project in March. The project also created an information centre with Internet access, and a centre for Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) at the school's clinic.
- UNFPA and EngenderHealth collaborated with networks of people living with HIV through a global electronic discussion forum and qualitative research at the country level. The goal is to develop, with other partners, much-needed guidance on the rights and sexual and reproductive health of people living with HIV, particularly women.

### YOUNG PEOPLE AND HIV/AIDS

Young people are most at risk, most vulnerable and most able to create change. Half of all new cases of HIV/AIDS are among young people: 6,000 young people are infected with HIV each day.

- The achievements and future course of a joint initiative of UNFPA and the OPEC Fund for International Development were reviewed in meetings in April. The HIV-prevention project had used new, innovative approaches to reach young people and encourage behaviour change. The OPEC Fund has contributed \$4.2 million to a three-year programme that targets vulnerable youth in six countries of

Central America and the Caribbean and seven countries in the Arab region.

- In Romania, UNFPA continued to support the Youth-for-Youth Foundation in 2005. During eight years of partnership, the group has trained more than 7,000 peer educators, conducted national campaigns, and created a computer game on STIs and HIV/AIDS for a website used by nearly 150,000 visitors each year.
- In Mozambique, integrated services were the focus of a pilot programme launched by UNFPA in two sites, supported by the Gerção Biz project. The sites expanded reproductive health care to include VCT, treatment of opportunistic infections, HIV prevention in pregnancy, community home-based care and support groups for youth living with HIV/AIDS. Also, UNFPA and Pathfinder International planned for the scaling up of Gerção Biz to reach more than half of the country's youth population.
- Thousands of adolescents in the county of Deqing in Zhejiang Province, China, gained life skills through training and access to information via hotlines and new "youth-friendly services" rooms established in 2005 in every township in the county.
- Anti-AIDS clubs in five secondary schools in Mansoura, Egypt, were established in 2005 to provide HIV prevention information as part of a peer education effort of the UNFPA-supported Global Youth Partners.
- UNFPA organized a forum on scaling up HIV prevention for young people at the Seventh

International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific in July in Kobe, Japan. In a pre-conference event in Abuja, Nigeria, UNFPA organized a forum on HIV prevention for 300 young people at the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA) in December.

- In Asia and Africa, more than 100 partnerships have been formed to improve the provision of sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention and services. In Asia, youth centres have been expanded to ensure that young people's access to information is linked to access to youth-friendly services.

## CONDOM PROGRAMMING

The latex condom is the most efficient available technology to reduce the sexual transmission of HIV and other STIs. Condoms are highly effective, yet fewer than half of all people at risk of HIV infection are able to obtain them.

- UNFPA, PATH, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Department for International Development in the United Kingdom convened the Global Consultation on the Female Condom in September 2005 in Baltimore, the United States, where world experts came to an unprecedented agreement to work together to intensify female condom programming.
- In Myanmar, UNFPA and Population Services International agreed to procure and distribute 500,000 female condoms from 2005 to 2007. The female condom was also promoted in Malawi, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe as part of a UNFPA effort to serve at least 23 countries through the Global Female Condom Initiative.

- Two manuals on Condom Programming for HIV Prevention were published jointly in 2005 by UNFPA, WHO and PATH. They provide step-by-step guidance for programme managers and service providers.

- In Asia, the Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth and Adolescents has impacted access to condoms through youth-friendly information, education, services and counselling for youth, such as establishing "condom corners" in Bangladesh.

## EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

- UNFPA continued to support HIV prevention among military and police personnel in more than a dozen countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Since 2000, the Peruvian Armed Forces and Police Committee for the Prevention of HIV/AIDS has conducted training, distributed condoms, established norms and collected data for studies. In November 2005, UNFPA and UNAIDS signed an agreement with the Salvadoran Ministry of Defense to bring education in HIV prevention and other issues of sexual and reproductive health to military personnel.
- UNFPA and the Population Media Center published *Soap Operas for Social Change to Prevent HIV/AIDS: A Training Guide for Journalists and Media Personnel* with how-to guidance for producing entertainment-education serial dramas for HIV prevention.
- On World AIDS Day, 1 December, the Prime Minister of India released a handbook of frequently asked questions about HIV/AIDS at a national convention attended by 1,500 youth leaders. UNFPA marked the day with the New York launch of "I've Got the Power," an online photo mosaic that encourages public dialogue on HIV/AIDS.

Photo: UNFPA Ukraine



Participants at a national Y-PEER (Youth Peer Education Network) meeting in Odessa, Ukraine. Y-PEER, a groundbreaking youth-to-youth education initiative pioneered by UNFPA, uses the Internet to prevent HIV infection and address other adolescent sexual and reproductive health issues. As of the end of 2005, Y-PEER linked more than 3,000 members from 39 countries, providing them with news, advocacy materials, lesson plans, methodologies, distance learning courses, discussion forums, events, and new peer education training tools; it also conducts training workshops to expand impact. In August 2005, 11 Arab States and two East African countries joined the Y-PEER Network as part of Y-PEER's Going Global Initiative.