

**28th June 2010, Bangkok - The UN is urging Asia Pacific governments to step up their efforts to address gender inequalities in HIV response as rates of infection among women in the region continue to rise.**

Some 1.6 million women are living with HIV in the Asia Pacific region, while 35 percent of all HIV infections in Asia are women, compared with just 18 percent two decades ago, according to UNAIDS. "Tackling harmful gender norms that are at the root of women's vulnerability to HIV is crucial to stem the spread of the epidemic," said Moni Pizani, UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) regional programme director.

UNIFEM and UNAIDS launched an action plan on 28 June in Pattaya, Thailand, calling for national AIDS policies to be better focused on gender issues.

Women who face economic and social inequalities are more vulnerable to HIV infection, said UNAIDS Asia Pacific regional gender adviser Jane Wilson. "A gender focus is crucial to stem the spread of HIV fuelled by gender inequalities that increasingly place women and girls at risk."

Source: [PlusNews](#)