



SAVING LIVES: CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO HIV AND AIDS TREATMENT

Current State of Affairs

In 2005 700,000 children were infected with HIV and 570,000 died of AIDS. 2.3 million children under the age of 15 are living with HIV worldwide, and less than 5 per cent of them have access to the AIDS treatment they desperately need.

Over 90 per cent of HIV positive children live in sub-Saharan Africa where there is extremely limited access to forms of treatments which can prevent mother to child infection and prolong the lives of infected children. This inequity has disastrous consequences. AIDS has already caused infant mortality in Africa to increase by more than 19 per cent, and has contributed to increases in under-five mortality throughout the region.

International and national commitments to fight HIV and AIDS have gained momentum over the last decade. Between 2002 and 2004 AIDS funding nearly trebled but the funds committed still fall far short of resource needs. AIDS funding is not being adequately channeled to meet the needs of children, particularly in regards to making treatment more readily available.

Challenges/Barriers

At the end of 2005, nearly 700,000 children needed anti-retroviral therapy (ART) and 4 million needed cotrimoxazole prophylaxis, a life-prolonging antibiotic which is highly effective in preventing life-threatening opportunistic infections in HIV positive children. While drug treatment is only one part of a comprehensive package of care and support that children require, as long as drug treatment for children remains inadequate, HIV positive children's needs will not be met.

¹The Global Movement for Children, is a world-wide movement of organisations and people uniting efforts to build a world fit for children. Organisations include: CARE, ENDA Tiers Monde, the Latin American and Caribbean Network for Children, NetAid, Oxfam, Plan, Save the Children, UNICEF and World Visions

²The data and recommendations included in this position paper are taken from the GMC report: "Saving Lives: Children's Right to HIV and AIDS Treatment," which will be released in May 2006. Children's Right to HIV and AIDS Treatment, "which will be released in May 2006.

Recommendations

The Global Movement for Children¹ is calling for coordinated action to be taken now to **PROTECT** the rights of children infected with HIV and to **INVEST** in their future².

- *Treatment for all by 2010.* Member States must uphold their commitment to universal treatment by 2010 and recognize that children have specific treatment needs. This includes providing positive women with appropriate interventions to prevent mother to child transmission; ensuring access to cotrimoxazole preventive treatment for infants born to HIV infected mothers, and ensuring access for all children to anti-retroviral treatment.
- *Child specific treatment targets.* National governments and international bodies must be held responsible for immediately increasing the numbers of children on anti-retroviral treatment. This includes recognising children's right to treatment as a fundamental human right, explicitly including children in national and international treatment targets.
- *Child-focused research and development.* There is a pressing need to develop simple and affordable diagnostic tests for young children to ensure early identification of infection; increase child-focused research and development and produce affordable fixed dose combination anti-retroviral drugs for young children.
- *Improve health care systems of poor countries.* National governments must prioritize the health care sector in budgets, international donors must increase investment in the development of health care systems, and health professionals must be trained to meet children's treatment needs.

The UNGASS Review must ensure that universality of access means meeting the needs of all affected communities including children.





Global Movement for Children
<http://www.gmfc.org>



World AIDS Campaign
www.worldaidscampaign.org

