

25 Years of AIDS

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In June 1981, scientists in the United States reported the first clinical evidence of a disease that would later become known as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome or AIDS. Twenty five years later, the AIDS epidemic has spread to every corner of the world. Around 40 million people are today living with HIV and over 25 million have died of AIDS. But 25 years of struggle to control the epidemic have also yielded a growing list of breakthroughs.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1959 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The oldest specimen of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) ever detected in a blood sample – donated by a man in Leopoldville, Congo.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1981 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The first cases of unusual immune system failures are identified among gay men, women and injecting drug users.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1982 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is defined for the first time. In the course of the year the three modes of transmission are identified: blood, mother-to-child, and sexual intercourse.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1983 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Luc Montagnier in France isolates lymphadenopathy-associated virus (LAV), later to become known as human immunodeficiency virus or HIV. - A heterosexual AIDS epidemic is revealed in Central Africa.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1984 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Robert Gallo in the U.S. identifies HIV as the cause of AIDS.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1985 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The global scope of the growing epidemic becomes manifest. By 1985, at least one case of HIV has been reported in each region of the world. - The first HIV antibody tests are commercialised in the United States and in Europe, and HIV screening of blood donations begins. - More than 2000 people attend the first International Conference on AIDS in Atlanta.

Uniting the world against **AIDS**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A clinical case definition of AIDS is developed for developing countries at a World Health Organization (WHO) workshop on AIDS in Bangui, Central African Republic. - Film star Rock Hudson becomes the first international icon to disclose he has AIDS.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1986 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An International Steering Committee for People with HIV/AIDS is created – later to become the Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GNP+).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1987 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Africa’s first community-based response to AIDS (The AIDS Support Organisation or TASO) is formed in Uganda. It becomes a role model for similar groups around the world. - In February, WHO establishes the Special Programme on AIDS. - AIDS becomes the first disease ever debated on the floor of the United Nations General Assembly. - The first therapy for AIDS – azidothymidine (AZT) – is approved for use in the United States.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1988 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The International AIDS Society is founded – an organisation of professionals working on HIV/AIDS. - Health Ministers from around the world meet in London and discuss the AIDS epidemic for the first time. - WHO declares 1 December as World AIDS Day. - Women now account for half of adults living with HIV in sub Saharan Africa (as assessed by recent models informed by national surveys).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1990 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By 1990 around 1 million children had lost one or both parents to AIDS.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1991 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The red ribbon becomes an international symbol of AIDS awareness. - The global network of non-governmental and community-based organizations ICASO (International Council of AIDS Service Organizations) is formed to mobilize communities and their organizations to participate in the response to AIDS.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1992-1993 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HIV prevalence in Uganda and Thailand begins to decrease as a result of countrywide mobilization against the epidemic.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1994 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At the Paris AIDS Summit, 42 national governments declare that the principle of greater involvement of people living with HIV (GIPA) is critical to ethical and effective national responses to the epidemic. - Scientists develop the first treatment regimen to reduce mother-to-child HIV transmission.

▪ **1995**

- An HIV outbreak in Eastern Europe is detected among injecting drug users.

▪ **1996**

- The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) becomes operational.
- Evidence of the efficacy of highly active antiretroviral therapy is presented for the first time at the 11th International AIDS Conference in Vancouver.
- Brazil becomes the first developing country to provide antiretroviral therapy through its public health system.

▪ **1997**

- With the support of UNAIDS the first public antiretroviral therapy programme in Africa, the Drug Access Initiative is launched, first in Kampala and later in Abidjan.
- The Global Business Council on HIV/AIDS is created (later to become the Global Business Coalition on AIDS).
- USAID publishes the first "Children on the Brink: Strategies to Support HIV/AIDS," report highlighting the epidemic's impact on children.

▪ **1998**

- The first short-course regimen to prevent mother-to-child transmission is announced.
- The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) is established in South Africa to mobilize national support for access to treatment by people living with HIV.
- Thirty-nine pharmaceutical companies file a law suit against the South African government to contest legislation aimed at reducing the price of medicines.

▪ **1999**

- The first efficacy trial of a potential HIV vaccine in a developing country starts in Thailand.
- The UN launches the International Partnership against AIDS in Africa to bring together key stakeholders to mount an intensified response to the epidemic.

▪ **2000**

- The UN Security Council discusses AIDS for the first time.
- The Millennium Development Goals are announced as part of the Millennium Declaration and include reversing the spread of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria as one of eight key goals.
- UNAIDS and WHO announce a joint initiative with five pharmaceutical companies to increase access to HIV treatment in developing countries (the Accelerating Access Initiative).

▪ **2001**

- UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan launches a call to action in Abuja, calling for a 'war chest' of US\$ 7-10 billion to be spent annually on AIDS in developing countries.
- The first UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS unanimously adopts the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, which declares AIDS a global catastrophe and calls for worldwide commitment to fight AIDS.
- The World Trade Organisation adopts the Doha Declaration allowing for wider access to HIV treatment through generic drugs.

▪ **2002**

- The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria becomes operational and approves the first round of grants.

▪ **2003**

- US President George Bush announces the US\$ 15 billion President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief during the State of the Union Address.
- WHO and UNAIDS launch the '3 by 5' initiative with the aim of helping low- and middle-income countries increase the number of people who have access to antiretroviral therapy from 400 000 to 3 million people by the end of 2005.

▪ **2004**

- UNAIDS launches the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS.
- An agreement is reached on the 'Three Ones' principle – one national AIDS framework, one national AIDS authority and one system for monitoring and evaluation – as guiding principles for engagement on AIDS by national and international actors.

▪ **2005**

- At the G8 Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, leaders pledge to come as close as possible to universal access to antiretroviral treatment worldwide by 2010.
- At the 2005 UN World Summit in New York, world leaders agree to take action to scale up HIV prevention, treatment, care and support with the aim of coming as close as possible to the goal of universal access to treatment by 2010 for all those who need it.
- Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh establishes the National Council on AIDS.
- Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao announces increased measures to fight AIDS.
- A 'Global Task Team on improving coordination among multilateral institutions and international donors to further strengthen the AIDS response in countries' recommends measures to improve effectiveness of the international response to AIDS.
- UNICEF and UNAIDS launch 'Unite for Children Unite Against AIDS,' a global campaign focusing on the enormous impact of AIDS on children.
- By the end of 2005 1.3 million people in low- and middle-income countries are receiving access to antiretroviral therapy.