



HIV and AIDS Data Hub for Asia-Pacific
**EVIDENCE
TO ACTION**



HIV AND AIDS ONLINE DATA HUB LAUNCHED

MANILA, PHILIPPINES (28 November 2008) — The first-ever one-stop online resource hub providing comprehensive and easy-to-access HIV and AIDS data in Asia and the Pacific was launched today.

The Evidence to Action Initiative – a partnership between the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the UN Joint Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS), the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) – provides user-friendly data on most-at-risk population groups, women, children, and young people, disaggregated by age and sex. It also probes the provincial and district-level situation where data are available, and provides updates on the prevalence, behaviours and national responses.

The data hub is guided by a Science and Technical Advisory Group which met this week in Manila to discuss ways to use evidence and analyses for policy makers, researchers, and frontline workers to improve the prevention, care, and treatment of HIV and AIDS.

“This data hub initiative is important to help us understand the AIDS epidemic in Asia-Pacific, which can greatly facilitate decision-making by national leaders,” said Ursula Schaefer-Preuss, ADB’s Vice President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development. “A data hub can easily monitor interventions for the right groups at the right places, given the concentrated nature of HIV and AIDS in Asia and the Pacific.”

The AIDS epidemic in Asia and the Pacific is attributed to unprotected paid sex and sexual contact between men with other men, and injecting drug use with shared needles. Many of those who buy sex and inject drugs infect their wives or girl friends, who then transmit the virus to their babies. Among the most-at-risk populations in Asia, although HIV is largely concentrated in injecting drug users and sex workers and their clients, men who buy sex are becoming a key driver of Asia’s HIV epidemics. The recent Asia AIDS Commission Report estimated at least 75 million Asian men buy sex regularly from about 10 million Asian women who sell sex. Male-male sex and drug injectors add another 20 million or more to the men at high risk of HIV infection.¹

“The hub and all of the data help substantiate a major call by the Asia AIDS Commission to prioritize interventions on those most-at-risk, and achieve a high level of service coverage and behavioural change to halt the spread of HIV in the most cost-effective way,” said Prasada Rao, Director of UNAIDS Regional Support Team for Asia-Pacific. He also notes that HIV data collection has improved over the past decade. “But the system and capacity to analyse the information still pose a challenge to many countries in the region,” he added.

UNICEF is managing the searchable online resource hub: www.aidsdatahub.org and an on-line dbase: www.devinfo.info/Evidencetoaction. The website carries multiple sources of data and reports, PowerPoint presentations and reviews on the HIV and AIDS situation in 24 countries and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

“The data hub ensures wide and equal access to evidence by stakeholders involved in national and localized responses to HIV and AIDS. The access is critical, especially in monitoring how the epidemic is spreading from the most-at-risk populations to women and children,” said

¹ “Redefining AIDS in Asia, Crafting an Effective Response”, Report of the Commission on AIDS in Asia, Oxford University Press, March 2008

Anupama Rao Singh, UNICEF's Regional Director, at the launch in Manila. "The data hub provides a nexus of data and information that can help us know our epidemics better. They will be useful not only in tracking HIV but also other MDGs, including primary health care and social determinants of HIV and the integrated response needed to multiply survival and development outcomes."

Equipped with the latest HIV statistics, the hub's information comprises all of the internationally-accepted standardized indicators ranging from HIV prevalence and condom use rate to knowledge and country specific indicators. Trend analysis and quality of data are assessed and monitored by the advisory group of 15 multi-disciplinary HIV and AIDS epidemiologists and public health experts, who also guide the hub's effort to harmonize data reporting, and support timely data update to track the epidemic and service coverage.

"The scale-up towards universal access, especially for the most vulnerable groups in Asia-Pacific, require rapid data collection and strong analysis in the countries," said Omi Shigeru, WHO's Regional Director. "WHO is committed to strengthening national capacity for data analysis, and this public resource ensures, at the regional level, services coverage is tracked, the epidemic's trajectory better understood, and new knowledge is captured, all of which contribute to our efforts for an HIV-free future."

With the data hub, users can access:

- Graphs and tables showing country analyses of the HIV trend, vulnerability, knowledge risk behaviour, national responses and socio-economic impact;
- Review of the HIV situation and response in each country;
- Most recent HIV and AIDS data covering all aspects of the epidemic and response on Excel spreadsheets;
- Key data issues and suggestions for improvement based on a review of all data collated;
- Links to published resources, such as national strategic plans, surveillance reports, population-based surveys and specific studies

In addition, users can search the database using keywords, send queries on HIV and AIDS data, and provide new data sources.

For more information, contact:

ADB : Tsukasa Maekawa
Principal Media Relations Specialist
Email: tmaekawa@adb.org

UNAIDS: Amala Reddy
Regional Advisor
Strategic Information
Email: ReddyA@unaids.org

UNICEF: Lely Djuhari
Communication Specialist
EAPRO
Email: ldjuhari@unicef.org

WHO: Dr Massimo Ghidinelli
Regional Advisor- HIV/STI
Email: ghidinellim@wpro.who.int