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## **Two million die of AIDS in sub - Saharan Africa**

12 April, 2006

GABORONE - The World Health Organisation (WHO) says each year more than two million people die because of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa while a further three million new infections occur in Africa.

A press release from the WHO African Region Committee issued in the run-up to yesterday's launch of the acceleration of HIV prevention efforts in Gaborone by the Ministry of Health, WHO, NACA, UNAIDS and other development partners, half of newly infected individuals in the region are young people aged between 15 and 24 years.

The launch was done simultaneously with the continental launch in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Similar events were programmed to take place in Dakar, Senegal; Khartoum, Sudan; and Pretoria, South Africa; and linked by satellite to the main launch in the Ethiopian capital.

In August last year, 46 health ministers met in Maputo, Mozambique, as the WHO Regional Committee for Africa and adopted resolution AFR/RC55/R6 aimed at accelerating HIV prevention in the African Region.

The resolution called on member states to intensify HIV prevention efforts and to declare 2006 as the Year for Acceleration of HIV Prevention in the African Region.

It builds on commitments by heads of state, the United Nations and international partners in the Abuja Declaration, the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals, and the AU Maputo Declaration, the release states.

The adoption of the resolution by the ministers of health implies that exceptional measures would be taken to increase the pace and scale of HIV prevention intervention in Africa to substantially reduce the number of new infections on the continent.

It says the implementation of resolution AFR/RC55/R6 requires full involvement of all public and private sectors, civil society and people living with HIV/AIDS, and sustained support from all development partners if there was to be any impact on the HIV pandemic.

A meeting of UN agencies in Brazzaville, Congo, in November last year backed the resolution and signed a declaration to support the acceleration efforts.

The the African Union commission stresses that acceleration of HIV prevention is an initiative that deserves to be given high visibility while working towards the goal of universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and care by 2010.

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