

UNAIDS Chief call for global spending on HIV/AIDS programmes to be doubled

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Speaking in Khayelitsha township on the outskirts of Cape Town on Tuesday Michel Sidibé, the new Executive Director of UNAIDS, launched the agencies latest report calling for an estimated investment of US\$25 billion to ensure that countries reach the universal access targets for prevention, treatment and care by 2010.

In his first major global statement Mr Sidhibe said "We cannot let the economic crisis paralyze us. Stimulus packages and economic adjustments should be made with a human face in mind. A mother should not have to choose between continuing AIDS treatment and feeding her children. We cannot let down the 4 million people on treatment and millions more in need today."

"It will not be easy to close this gap but it is achievable and absolutely necessary if we are to accelerate the pace of the response to the AIDS epidemi. Together we will help save lives—by putting more people on treatment, protecting babies and young people from getting infected, and ensuring that a whole generation of children will graduate from school."

Members of local AIDS organisations, civil society, as well as diplomatic and government officials were among the guests and the South African Minister of Health Ms Barbara Hogan also addressed the launch of the report 'What countries need: Investments needed for 2010 targets'.