2006 AND BEYOND

The years 2004 and 2005 brought improvements across the spectrum of HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment in the Region, and these achievements laid the foundation for further scale up and ultimately the fulfillment of the universal access goal. The ten-year time period between 2006 and 2015, the target date for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, has the potential to bring about dramatic changes in HIV in the Region. But to do this, a concerted effort is required at all levels. The specific areas to be addressed can be grouped into three central challenges:

1. Strengthening health systems and services to protect achievements and move toward universal access

   - Integration of prevention, care, and treatment
   - Application of prevention interventions based on evidence
   - Decentralization of HIV services including diagnosis, care, and treatment
   - Human resources capacity building
   - Alleviation of stigma and discrimination

2. Financing and sustainability of programs

   - Securing financing for the continuation of programs after current grant cycles
   - Obtaining adequate amounts of medications and supplies at the best possible prices
   - Establishing sustainable systems for the supply of medicines and commodities

3. Harmonization and collaboration

   - Maximization of resources by avoiding parallel processes and competition among organizations
   - Implementation of “The Three Ones”
THE WAY FORWARD

Achieving universal access in the Region will require work on many fronts; in health, finance, development, education, social welfare, and other sectors. PAHO/WHO’s contribution to the universal access agenda specifically focuses on assisting countries in scaling up the health sector response. In light of existing commitments to universal access and the Millennium Development Goals, PAHO/WHO recently published the Regional HIV/STI Plan for the Health Sector 2006-2015. The plan was developed in collaboration with multiple partners in countries and at the international level including Ministries of Health, National AIDS Programs, development partners, people with HIV, and representatives from civil society. Based on an analysis of the state of the epidemic in the Region, the Plan sets overall targets in the areas of reducing new infections and providing universal access to comprehensive care including prevention, care, and treatment.

Five critical lines of action were developed to help countries scale up the response to HIV/AIDS in line with the five strategic orientations of the 3 by 5 Initiative. Each critical line of action includes specific strategies to be undertaken by health authorities and other stakeholders, targets to be achieved by 2010 or 2015, and milestones to mark progress. The critical lines of action are:

- Strengthening health sector leadership and stewardship and fostering the engagement of civil society
- Designing and implementing effective, sustainable HIV/AIDS/STI programs, and building human resource capacity
- Strengthening, expanding, and reorienting heath services
- Improving access to medicines, diagnostics, and other commodities
- Improving information and knowledge management, including surveillance, monitoring and evaluation, and dissemination.

The Plan was launched in November 2005 and the process of integrating the Plan into existing national or subregional plans began in January 2006, at the 2nd meeting of the HIV/AIDS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). At that time, the Plan was discussed in detail and representatives from National AIDS Programs and PAHO/WHO country offices examined links between national plans and the Regional Plan, existing gaps, and opportunities for scaling up the health sector response in countries. The Regional Plan has also been an important reference document in national, subregional and regional consultations on universal access.
PAHO/WHO has developed a strategy for the rollout of the Plan at national, subregional and regional levels. Major emphasis in 2006-2007 will be given to supporting countries in developing, reviewing, or updating their HIV/STI health sector plans, including the definition of principles, country targets, the package of services to be provided, health care delivery options, and cost. Similar exercises will be conducted at the subregional level to identify areas in need of subregional action such as the issue of universal access for migrant populations.\(^\text{13}\)

Following the lines of action in the Regional Plan, PAHO/WHO will take the lead, together with the UNAIDS Secretariat, key UN agencies such as UNICEF and UNFPA, and development partners, to construct a strong regional program for reaching the goals of universal access. It is through collaborative work toward our common objective that the needs of countries will be met and the Region will eventually provide access for all.
TOWARD UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO HIV PREVENTION, CARE, AND TREATMENT

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