

Press Release



United Nations Population Fund
Office for the Pacific

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is an international development agency that promotes the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity.

UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programmes to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.

UNFPA – because everyone counts.

UNFPA: Working To Turn Back the Aids Clock

24 May 2006, - The newly re-launched AIDS Clock, an initiative of UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, has been counting the relentless toll of the epidemic since 1997.

When UNFPA unveiled the AIDS Clock that year in the United Nations public lobby in New York, it registered some 24 million people living with HIV. In the intervening period, most of those people have died, and millions more have become infected. In 1999, UNFPA launched the AIDS Clock as a web-based exhibit, and has recently revised and expanded its reach. The clock's mission remains unchanged: to present the world with a powerful symbol of the epidemic's scale and the urgent response it demands.

More than 65 million people have been infected with HIV since AIDS was first detected 25 years ago. More than 25 million people have died, and an estimated 40.3 million people are now living with HIV.

“The AIDS Clock reminds us of how pressing our work is,” said UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Ahmed Obaid. *“The clock ticks louder as the number of people living with HIV increases. Behind each number is a face, a family and a circle of loved ones who are also affected. Our goal is to slow down, and eventually turn back the AIDS Clock. Preventing HIV is the key.”*

The clock will be recalibrated after new epidemiological data are released by UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, in its 2006 Report on the global AIDS epidemic. The report will be presented to the United Nations High-level Meeting on AIDS (31 May-2 June), a fifth-year assessment of progress since the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS was adopted at an historic special session of the General Assembly in 2001.

In addition to showing an estimate of the people living with HIV, the clock links to regional figures, fact sheets and epidemiology trends, based on information provided by UNAIDS. It also provides links to each of the 10 UNAIDS co-sponsors, and to some of the major campaigns that work to spread awareness of the issue and mobilize effective responses.

The AIDS Clock attracts thousands of visits each month. Organizations, schools and networks are invited to link to this multimedia advocacy tool at www.unfpa.org/aids_clock.

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