

“Advancing sustainable, inclusive science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind

Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages. Target 3.3 focuses on ending epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria by 2030. The 2016 United Nations Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS commits countries to accelerate efforts to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030. Despite significant progress, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, the region remains the worst affected by the HIV epidemic, necessitating urgent and exceptional action at all levels, especially to address the impact on women, adolescent girls, and children.

In 2022, \$20.8 billion was available for the HIV response in low and middle-income countries from both domestic and international sources, but this funding was insufficient to adequately finance the HIV response. UNAIDS estimates that HIV funding in East and Southern Africa peaked in 2017 at \$11.1 billion but declined to \$9.3 billion in 2023.

While domestic financing in 2023 contributed approximately 40% of the HIV response in East and Southern Africa, this figure is skewed by countries like South Africa, Botswana, Kenya, and Namibia. Most countries in the region remain heavily dependent on donor funding. Of the 16 countries with reported data from national governments to Global AIDS Monitoring, nine showed domestic financing at less than 25%, and seven of these had under 10% domestic contribution.

The growing public debt in sub-Saharan African countries is severely limiting their ability to fund health and HIV services. A UNAIDS report released ahead of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly highlighted that increasing debt payments and impending spending cuts, as outlined in International Monetary Fund agreements, could severely underfund HIV responses in the next three to five years if not addressed. Debt servicing now exceeds 50% of government revenues in countries such as Angola, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia. Even after debt relief measures, Zambia will still be paying two-thirds of its budget on debt servicing between 2024 and 2026.

To enable increased domestic resource mobilization for effective pandemic responses, sub-Saharan African countries need to strengthen their tax systems, including closing tax exemptions, which currently cost countries an average of 2.6% of GDP in lost revenue across the region. Donors also need to scale up financial assistance for health and the HIV response between now and 2030, while creditors should offer debt relief to heavily indebted countries to ease the burden.

Strategic Objectives: Sustainability and transition planning are coming up as even strong priorities for the coming period, considering the institutional and financing shock of the US Administration. The immediate shock of the sudden interruption of programs and investments has elevated the degree of political attention to the HIV response. This provides an opening to discuss, with a higher political priority, sustainability and transition planning across all countries, with the immediate perspective (3 to 6 months) of discussing future US allocations, that will come with a significant cut across the board.

1. Secure political leadership/commitment for increased funding, including domestic resources to sustain the AIDS response.
2. Support Governments, donors and communities to secure sustainable financing for community-led responses and build synergies with broader initiatives on domestic resource mobilisation, institutionalise partnership with CSOs on health to amplify advocacy and action on social contracting
3. engage the private sector to contribute to advancing HIV response and advocate for equitable and affordable access to innovative health technologies, and local manufacturing

Participants: The High-Level Side Event is co-hosted by the Uganda AIDS Commission, UNAIDS, the National Forum of People Living with HIV/AIDS Networks in Uganda (NAFOPHANU), and Makerere School of Public Health. High-level participants with foreseen speaking roles include ministers, high-level policymakers, representatives of the PEPFAR, the Global Fund, the African Union, UNDP, UNFPA, and the WHO. The event will feature representation from a range of sectors, including high-level speakers from the private sector and philanthropy, civil society, and importantly, the participation of young people living with HIV, who will represent the voices of youth and all those with the greatest stake in the future and sustainability of the HIV response.

Moderator: The event will be moderated by Dr. Nelson Musoba, Director General of the Uganda AIDS Commission.

Panelists: Panelists include the Executive Director of UNAIDS, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance in Uganda, the Chief Executive Officer of the National AIDS Coordinating Agency in Botswana, the Executive Director of the National AIDS Control Council in Kenya, the heads of the Tanzania Commission for AIDS, the Chief Executive Officer of Quality Chemical Ltd in Uganda, and the Executive Director of NAFOPHANU.