



MEDIA RELEASE

RESULTS International (Australia)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AIDS funding at a critical crossroad: lives will be lost despite recent progress

Today marks World AIDS Day, observed across the world to raise awareness about the issues surrounding HIV/AIDS. And whilst immense progress in the fight against the virus has been made over the last decade, today, more than ever before, the global response to HIV/AIDS is at a crossroad.

On one hand, new scientific evidence promises to finally reverse the epidemic; In June this year, UN member states set a target to increase the number of people on HIV treatment to 15 million by 2015, from 6.6 million today. And in November, the U.S. made the goal of 'turning the tide on AIDS' official government policy, looking ahead to reaching an AIDS free generation, within our lifetime.

On the other hand, these break-through scientific advances and lofty political commitments come at a time when funding for HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention is in steady decline.

Just last week, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, one of the single largest funders of AIDS programs worldwide, was forced to cancel its next round of funding for new proposals, an action which has never been taken since it was created in 2002.

The decision comes as a consequence of mostly European donor governments' failure to fulfill their pledges to the Fund.

"The goal of achieving an 'AIDS-free generation' has been dealt a huge blow by this disappointing decision that the Global Fund has been forced to make," says Maree Nutt, National Manager of anti-poverty advocacy group, RESULTS International (Australia).

"Just as the global community begins to talk seriously about the end of AIDS, the most important and effective financial facility addressing the pandemic is gutted," Ms Nutt added.

The Australian Government is considered a strong supporter of the Global Fund and is not at risk of defaulting on its three-year commitment of \$210 million to 2013. However, more can be done.

RESULTS is calling on the Government to not only deliver this commitment sooner rather than later, but also to increase its support significantly, sending a strong signal to other donors of its confidence in the critical role of the Global Fund to save lives and win the war against AIDS.

"The disconnect between what can be done, and the funding being made available to get it done is painful. Winning the war against AIDS could be our greatest achievement this century." Ms Nutt said.

"Donors need to match their purses with their rhetoric because without urgent action, we are in danger of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory."

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