



NOT THE TIME TO STEP BACK!

Addressing the Impact of Funding Termination on HIV/AIDS Programs in the Asia-Pacific Region

Dear UNAIDS Asia Pacific, donors, and policymakers,

We, the civil society organizations and community networks across the Asia-Pacific region, express our deep concern over the recent decision by the United States Government to terminate funding to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). This decision threatens to undermine the progress made in combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic and jeopardizes the health and well-being of millions worldwide.

Impact on Local HIV Responses

UNAIDS has played a crucial role in supporting grassroots organizations, community-led initiatives, and national HIV responses that provide prevention, treatment, and care services to key populations. As of 2023, approximately 30.7 million people globally were accessing antiretroviral therapy (ART), with 6.7 million people living with HIV in the Asia-Pacific region alone. The withdrawal of U.S. funding will disrupt these life-saving programs, limiting access to medications, testing, and prevention services that millions rely on daily.

Community organizations that depend on UNAIDS-supported funding to conduct outreach programs, provide psychosocial support, and ensure adherence to ART will face severe setbacks. This is particularly concerning for key populations, including men who have sex with men, transgender people, sex workers, and people who inject drugs that already experience disproportionate barriers to healthcare access. Many of these groups rely on UNAIDS-backed initiatives for stigma-free, community-led services that national health systems often fail to provide.

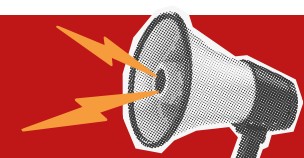
Without adequate funding, drop-in centers, community testing sites, and harm reduction services face closure, increasing the risk of rising HIV infections and treatment disruptions. Only 76% of people living with HIV in Asia and the Pacific are aware of their status, meaning thousands could be left undiagnosed and untreated. The absence of UNAIDS-supported programming will exacerbate gaps in service delivery, weaken the ability of frontline responders to reach those most in need, and further marginalize communities that are already disproportionately affected by HIV. We will see an explosion of new HIV infections in our region without having sufficient treatment and medication for those infected to achieve viral suppression.

"Accessing HIV testing and counselling services has been life-changing. With the funding cuts, I'm fearful of my health and life." – MSM

"Community centre is a home to many trans people who do not have shelter and safe spaces to live. Absence of funding to support this means that we are losing our home." – Transgender individual

Impact on Regional Key Population Networks and Organizations

At the regional level, UNAIDS has played an essential role in supporting coordination efforts among governments, civil society organizations, and key population networks across Asia and the Pacific. The funding freeze will not only impact UNAIDS' direct operations but also weaken regional advocacy and technical assistance that help countries develop and implement evidence-based HIV policies.





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UNAIDS has been a crucial convener in the region, ensuring that key population networks have a seat at the table in policy discussions. Regional networks and organizations working with key populations depend on UNAIDS' financial and technical support to advocate for laws and policies that protect their rights. Without UNAIDS' leadership in fostering partnerships between civil society and national governments, there is a real risk that community voices will be side-lined, and progress in addressing structural barriers to HIV prevention and treatment will stall.

The withdrawal of U.S. funding will also have a severe impact on UNAIDS' ability to mobilize resources for key population networks. Regional coordination efforts, such as the Seven Alliance, have relied on UNAIDS-supported resources to align strategies across different countries, ensuring that marginalized communities receive the support they need. The lack of financial resources forces these regional bodies to scale back their work, leading to fragmented HIV responses and a loss of knowledge-sharing mechanisms that have been critical in improving service delivery.

Additionally, the reduction in funding affects regional research and data collection. UNAIDS has played a leading role gathering and analyzing epidemiological data to inform effective interventions. Without adequate resources, research into HIV transmission patterns, emerging risks, and intervention effectiveness will decline leaving policymakers without the necessary data to make informed decisions.

Impact on International HIV Responses and Global Targets

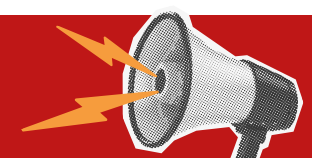
Globally, UNAIDS has been a driving force behind ambitious yet achievable targets such as the 95-95-95 strategy and the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.3, which aims to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. The termination of U.S. funding will significantly disrupt efforts to meet these targets, slowing progress on a global scale.

The 95-95-95 targets aim for 95% of people living with HIV to know their status, 95% of diagnosed individuals to receive treatment, and 95% of those on treatment to achieve viral suppression. Currently, the Asia and the Pacific region is lagging behind, with only 76% diagnosed, 62% on treatment, and 58% virally suppressed. Without sustained UNAIDS support, countries will struggle to bridge these gaps, and the goal of achieving epidemic control by 2030 may slip further out of reach.

Additionally, UNAIDS plays a critical role in mobilizing donor support and ensuring that resources are allocated effectively. The loss of U.S. funding sets a dangerous precedent, potentially leading other international donors to reduce or reassess their commitments. This could trigger a domino effect of funding shortfalls across multiple HIV programs, putting millions of lives at risk.

The U.S. has historically been the largest single donor to the global HIV response, contributing billions of dollars through programs such as PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief) and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. A significant reduction in this funding weakens UNAIDS' ability to coordinate the global response, provide technical assistance, and hold governments accountable to their commitments.

The consequences of this funding loss extend beyond HIV/AIDS alone. UNAIDS has been a leader in integrating HIV services into broader universal health coverage (UHC) efforts, linking HIV prevention and treatment with sexual and reproductive health, harm reduction, and mental health services. Without UNAIDS playing a central coordinating role, many of these integrated services will face challenges in sustaining their operations, undermining overall health system resilience.





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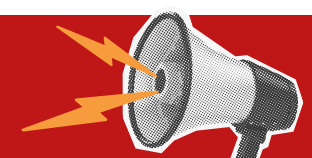
Call to Action for Collaboration

UNAIDS AP has our deepest gratitude for its firm dedication and invaluable support in advancing the health and rights of communities, particularly those most affected by HIV. The continued commitment of UNAIDS AP to providing essential resources, fostering strategic collaborations, and advocating for meaningful change has had a profound impact on the lives of individuals and communities. We deeply appreciate the tireless efforts of UNAIDS AP in ensuring access to care, raising awareness, and empowering those in greatest need. Thank you for your exemplary leadership and unwavering support in advancing our shared mission.

In light of these challenges, we urgently call upon all stakeholders to unite in preserving the gains made in the fight against HIV/AIDS:

- 1** To UNAIDS Asia-Pacific and Country Offices: It is vital that UNAIDS intensify its engagement with civil society, key population networks, and community-led organizations to develop comprehensive and impactful advocacy strategies. The voices of affected communities must be at the forefront of all decision-making processes, ensuring that their experiences and needs shape policies, programs, and interventions. We call on UNAIDS to prioritize meaningful collaboration with community-led organizations, which are critical in mobilizing grassroots efforts, identifying urgent needs, and coordinating local HIV responses. Their involvement in advocacy, policy development, and coordination is non-negotiable in the development of the next global AIDS strategy.
- 2** To Global Donors and Member States: It is absolutely critical to sustain financial commitments to UNAIDS, especially to bridge the significant funding gap left by the U.S. withdrawal. This support is not only vital to prevent the collapse of essential HIV/AIDS programs but also to sustain momentum towards achieving global HIV targets. In addition, sustained funding for the Global Fund and Robert Carr Fund (RCF) is non-negotiable for maintaining and expanding the impact of the global HIV response. We call upon global donors and member states to provide domestic or international financial support to ensure the continuity and success of these critical initiatives. Only through sustained financial commitments can we ensure that HIV/AIDS programs remain robust, effective, and fully equipped to meet the growing challenges of the epidemic.
- 3** To Governments in the Asia-Pacific Region: Governments must urgently strengthen health systems and ensure the robustness of HIV/AIDS programs. This requires a firm commitment to avoiding policies or laws that hinder access to HIV prevention, treatment, and care services. Laws that criminalize behaviors linked to HIV transmission or discriminate against marginalized communities must be abolished. Additionally, governments must ensure that stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and key populations, such as sex workers, people who inject drugs, and LGBTIQ+ individuals, are eradicated.
- 4** To Private Sector Partners: Collaborate with UNAIDS and community organizations to explore innovative funding mechanisms. Corporate social responsibility initiatives, public-private partnerships, and targeted fundraising campaigns can play a significant role in sustaining HIV/AIDS interventions.

The termination of U.S. funding to UNAIDS poses an unprecedented threat to global health. However, through concerted and collaborative action, we can mitigate its impact and continue our pursuit of a world free from HIV/AIDS. We implore all stakeholders to act decisively and with urgency to protect the lives and rights of those affected by this devastating disease.





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Enclosed is a list of organizations affected by or concerned about this funding landscape, and we hope that UNAIDS AP, donors, and stakeholders recognize that it's not just the HIV program and progress that are being hindered, but also the lives of individuals are at risk.

Sincerely,
Jointly signed by civil-society organizations and community-led organization in Asia-Pacific

Join Us in Solidarity

If your organisation has been affected by the recent funding termination, we invite you to join us in signing this letter. Even if your organization is not affected, your voice is critical in demonstrating the widespread impact of these funding cuts and ensuring that UNAIDS Asia-Pacific, donors, and policymakers recognize the urgent need for action. By adding your organization's name, you stand in solidarity with key populations and community networks working tirelessly to sustain HIV responses across the region.

Sign this letter through the Google Form link below:

<https://forms.gle/vRoYZoqJcRJKMy6L9>

No.	Organization	Country	Organization Scope	Key Population(s) Served

