
UNITED NATIONS
Information Service



NATIONS UNIES
Service d'information

VEREINTE NATIONEN
Informationsdienst

For information - not an official document • Zur Information - kein offizielles Dokument • Pour information - document sans caractère officiel

CAUTION: ADVANCE RELEASE

For use in connection with
World AIDS Day
Thursday, 1 December 1988

UNIS/SG/263
30 November 1988

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S WORLD AIDS DAY MESSAGE

NEW YORK, 30 November (UN Headquarters) -- Following is the text of the message from Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, on the occasion of World AIDS Day (1 December):

Today is World AIDS Day -- an international day of awareness and education about AIDS -- what it is, what it is doing to people all over the world and what all of us can do to stop its spread and to treat the afflicted.

The United Nations system, led by the World Health Organization, is now fully engaged in the struggle against AIDS; but the virus is still spreading. Every minute that passes, another person is infected. We must intensify our efforts to find vaccines and other means to prevent its transmission and, hopefully, to cure those already infected.

For the present, our one defence against AIDS is education and awareness, and our one guarantee for the effectiveness of our efforts is understanding and compassion. Trust, openness and co-operation are essential to any public health campaign, and this will ultimately spell the difference between a world in which the spread of AIDS has been halted, and one in which it runs out of control. Respect for the human rights and dignity of HIV-infected people and those with AIDS is therefore vital to our success.

Our battle is against AIDS, not against people with AIDS. And to those people, and to the many who work with them, we extend our hearts and our hands. Working together, this is a battle we can win.

* * * * *

UNITED NATIONS
Information Service



NATIONS UNIES
Service d'information

VEREINTE NATIONEN
Informationsdienst

For information - not an official document • Zur Information - kein offizielles Dokument • Pour information - document sans caractère officiel

UNIS/OB/12
28 November 1988

WORLD AIDS DAY TO BE OBSERVED AT VIENNA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

VIENNA, 28 November (UN Information Service) -- The first World AIDS Day (1 December) will focus attention on the world-wide effort against AIDS by encouraging Governments and communities, groups and individuals to talk about AIDS.

To mark the observance of the Day, a number of activities are planned at the Vienna International Centre (VIC) on Thursday, 1 December. A panel discussion conducted by Austrian and VIC experts will be held in the Board Room at 4 p.m. Prior to that, a film on AIDS will be shown at 3.30 p.m. In addition, video-tapes of the Secretary-General reading out his World AIDS Day message and a film on AIDS will be shown on monitors in the C-Building. An exhibition on AIDS is also planned. The VIC Joint Medical Service will operate a hot line on AIDS for staff members and their families.

The aim of World AIDS Day is to highlight the global range and scope of the fight already underway against AIDS, strengthen AIDS prevention and control programmes in countries, cities, communities and open new channels of communication about AIDS both within and between countries. In its World AIDS Day newsletter, the World Health Organization has outlined 10 points that people should know about AIDS (see attached).

As of 1 October 1988, nearly 120,000 cases of AIDS had been reported to WHO from 142 countries. It is estimated that as many as 300,000 cases had actually occurred since the beginning of the epidemic in the mid-1970s and that between 5 and 10 million people worldwide are currently infected. WHO estimates that during the next decade, there will be at least 2 to 3 million new AIDS cases.

* * * * *

TEN POINTS ON AIDS FOR WORLD AIDS DAY

1. AIDS is a new worldwide problem

Over 120,000 AIDS cases have been reported from over 140 countries throughout the world. All communities can be affected by AIDS because the AIDS virus (human immuno-deficiency virus --- HIV) can cross all boundaries, geographical and social. Worldwide, an estimated 5 to 10 million people are already infected with the AIDS virus.

2. We know how the AIDS virus spreads

Fortunately, the AIDS virus can only be spread in three ways: sexual intercourse, blood, from infected mother-to-infant.

3. To know how the AIDS virus spreads is to know how to prevent infection

The AIDS virus can be spread by sexual intercourse -- from man to woman, from woman to man and from man to man. The AIDS virus can also be spread through blood in two major ways: by receiving a transfusion of contaminated blood; or if needles or other skin-piercing instruments are used for more than one person without being properly cleaned and sterilized after each use. (For example, sharing of needles and syringes by drug users is a major way the AIDS virus spreads in some countries.) Finally, the AIDS virus can spread from infected women to their infants, either before, during, or shortly after birth.

4. The sexual spread of the AIDS virus can be prevented

The most effective means of preventing the sexual spread of the AIDS virus is by remaining with a faithful, uninfected partner or not to have sexual intercourse at all. Otherwise, a person should reduce the number of sexual partners as much as possible. Whenever having sexual intercourse with someone who might possibly be infected with the AIDS virus, a condom should be used --- properly -- from start to finish. People should avoid sexual intercourse with prostitutes or other people who have many sexual partners.

5. Infection through blood can be stopped in a variety of ways

Fortunately, blood for transfusion can be tested for infection with the AIDS virus and discarded if contaminated. Needles and other skin-piercing instruments can be sterilized after each use. Drug users can -- and should stop injecting drugs: if they continue, they should not re-use needles or share them with anyone.

6. It is important to know how the AIDS virus is not spread

The AIDS virus is not spread by casual contact at work or school, shaking hands, touching or hugging. It is not spread through food or water, by sharing cups or glasses, by sneezing, coughing, or insects, or in swimming pools or on toilets. Knowing how the AIDS virus is not spread helps people understand that there is no danger of becoming infected from casual contact unless they have sex with an infected person, share contaminated blood, or use a contaminated needle.

7. There is no need to fear people who are infected with the AIDS virus

They should not be discriminated against. They need our support to help them with the physical and emotional difficulties they face as a result of their infection.

8. In the absence of a vaccine or cure for AIDS, information and education is a vital tool

Some day, medical research may give us a drug to cure AIDS or a vaccine to prevent AIDS. Until then, we can stop the spread of AIDS through information, education and changes in human behaviour -- the personal behaviour of each person.

9. A global mobilization is underway to meet this global threat

National AIDS programmes already exist in nearly all countries of the world. These programmes work to inform and educate people about AIDS, how to avoid becoming infected and how to protect others. National AIDS programmes are linked together through the Global Programme on AIDS at the World Health Organization, which directs and co-ordinates the Global AIDS Strategy. Because AIDS is a global problem, it can only be stopped in one country if it is stopped in all countries.

10. Together, we can stop AIDS

You can contribute to stopping AIDS, by making sure that you understand the facts about AIDS and helping others to do the same. The risk of AIDS is not about who you are or where you are. It's about what you do. World AIDS Day is an opportunity for all of us to talk about AIDS, to learn, to teach and to speak out. Join the worldwide effort to stop AIDS.

* * * * *