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Global broadcasters to show AIDS drug film

TOP broadcasters around the world are to air a documentary on the life-changing effects of anti-retroviral drugs to mark World AIDS Day on December 1, the film's sponsors said.

US cable network HBO and Britain's Channel 4 will broadcast *"The Lazarus Effect"*, with discussions underway with 13 broadcasters in France, the Middle East, Brazil,

Argentina and India and elsewhere, the anti-AIDS group RED said.

The 30-minute documentary records the remarkable effects of anti-retroviral drugs on four HIV-positive people from Lusaka in Zambia, to raise awareness that AIDS is no longer an automatic death sentence.

From being at death's door at the outset of the film, they were back to an almost normal life within just 60 to 90 days on the drugs.

The fourth, however, a young girl, died just after the film was shot - possibly because she had received the medication too late, said Sheila Roche, RED's global communications director.

"The story of Lazarus is a story of hope that records the remarkable recovery of HIV positive people in Africa

thanks to access to treatment with anti-retroviral drugs, which have dropped dramatically in price to around 40 cents a day," Roche noted.

The title is also a reference to a passage in the Bible in which Jesus is said to have restored Lazarus to life, four days after he died.

Riche emphasised that the overall message of the film, which was produced with HBO Documentary Films, was to show people that HIV/AIDS was preventable and treatable.

But it was also a reminder that around 4,000 people die every day of AIDS in Africa because the treatment is not universally available, she said.

The film was shot by documentary film-maker Lance Bangs with executive producer Spike Jonze. - AFP