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## More HIV care for pregnant women in poor countries

WASHINGTON \_ Just over half of HIV-infected pregnant women in poor countries received crucial AIDS drugs to protect their unborn children last year, the World Health Organization reported, one of a list of improvements in the global fight against HIV.

Fifteen percent of infected pregnant women had access to that therapy five years ago, an important jump in the quest to eliminate mother-to-child HIV transmission by 2015.

Overall, the "Towards Universal Access" report shows steady increases in the number of people taking lifesaving antiretroviral treatment last year, to a record 5.2 million in poor and middle-income countries.

Still, only a third of people in need can get the drugs and most people living with HIV do not know they have it, the report concludes. It warns that the economic crisis could imperil even these treatment gains if investments in the global fight from poor and rich countries alike falter.

"It's an important moment. We need to sustain the momen-

tum," WHO's AIDS director, Dr. Gottfried Hirnschall, told The Associated Press.

The report comes ahead of a meeting next week about the budget of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, an international group that also has been an important source of financing.

Among findings of the report, from WHO and the United Nations:

\_Fifteen countries \_ including particularly hard-hit South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Swaziland \_ provided most of their pregnant women with medicines and services to prevent mother-to-child transmission last year.

\_Fourteen countries, including Brazil, Namibia and Ukraine, provided HIV treatment to more than 80 percent of their HIV-positive children in need.

\_Eight countries provided HIV treatment to more than 80 percent of adults in need. They are: Botswana, Cambodia, Croatia, Cuba, Guyana, Oman, Romania and Rwanda. Another 21 countries are getting close to that treatment target. AP