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Global AIDS funding cuts will affect millions: Activists

JOHANNESBURG: A \$1.6-billion (1.2-billion-euro) cut in funding for AIDS treatment could affect millions of people as donors failed to meet commitments to the Global Fund, campaigners said Monday.

The Global Fund last week said it would not bankroll new AIDS treatment projects until 2014 because the world financial crisis forced donor countries to cut spending.

But a civil society coalition including groups like aid agency Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) and South Africa's Treatment Action Campaign accused rich nations of using the crisis as an excuse.

"This is not an issue of funding. It comes down to broken promises," said Daygan Eager, of the Budget Expenditure Monitoring Forum, which campaigns for AIDS funding in southern Africa.

"In a crisis, donating to the Global Fund is not good politics," Eager told a press conference in Johannesburg.

The Global Fund is the world's largest multilateral funder of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria treatment. - AFP