

Headline	HIV drugs reach 8 million in needy countries		
MediaTitle	Daily Express (KK)		
Date	20 Jul 2012	Color	Black/white
Section	World	Circulation	30,557
Page No	I-18	Readership	97,836
Language	English	ArticleSize	155 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 319
Frequency	Daily (EM)	PR Value	RM 957



HIV drugs reach 8 million in needy countries

WASHINGTON: More than eight million people – a record number in low- and middle-income countries – are now taking antiretroviral drugs to treat HIV, according to data released Wednesday by UNAIDS.

The rise in drug coverage in 2011 was accompanied by a dramatic 31 percent drop in deaths from AIDS-related causes in sub-Saharan Africa, the area of the world most ravaged by the disease, compared to the peak of the epidemic in 2005.

In all low- and middle-income countries, the availability of antiretroviral drugs grew by more than 20 percent in just one year, over the latest figure of 6.6 million people covered in 2010, said the report.

Now, more than half (54 percent) of the estimated 14.8 million people in need of antiretrovirals in those countries can access them, according to the figures released in Washington ahead of the International AIDS Conference next week.

The report said the advance “puts the international community on track to reach the goal of 15 million people with HIV receiving treatment by 2015,” an aim unanimously agreed by UN member states.

“But access (to treatment) is not universal. We still have a problem with access in Asia, in Eastern Europe,

Central Asia so we need to redouble the effort,” said UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibe.

Those parts of the world are seeing deaths and new infections rise “in a very alarming way,” he said.

More governments have stepped up funding to help those suffering within their own borders, with 81 countries increasing their domestic investments for AIDS by more than 50 percent between 2006 and 2011.

Overall, low- and middle-income countries invested \$8.6 billion in responding to HIV/AIDS last year, an increase of 11 percent over 2010. International funding remained flat at 2008 levels of \$8.2 billion.

Total worldwide investment in HIV totalled \$16.8 billion last year, an 11 percent rise from 2010, but still far short of the \$22-24 billion needed by 2015, the report said.

Nearly half (48 percent) of all international assistance for HIV response last year came from the United States, which is hosting the July 22-27 scientific meeting expected to draw 25,000 people.

US AIDS Coordinator Eric Goosby said reducing the impact of AIDS worldwide was a “priority” for the US government and called for nations to step up their involvement in local AIDS programs.