



United Nations Development Programme HIV and Health Annual Report 2022-2023

Halfway to 2030: Accelerating progress on
the Sustainable Development Goals



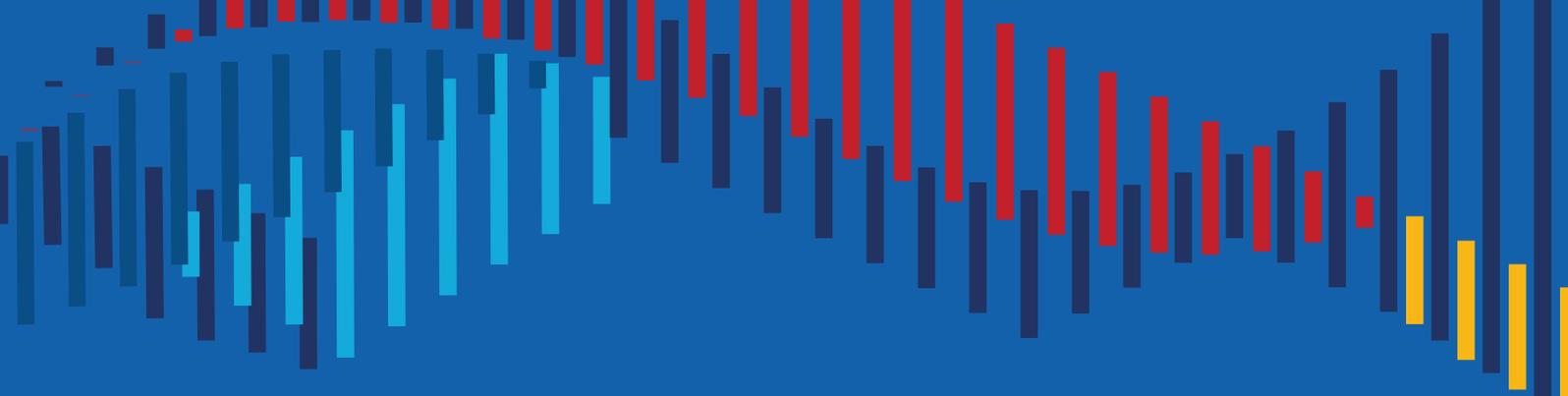
Cover photo: UNDP Angola

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FOREWORD

The year 2023 marked halfway to the 2030 deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the pledge to leave no one behind. It was also a testament to the global recognition of health as a cornerstone of sustainable development, human rights and human security. Pandemic treaty negotiations and three high-level health meetings at the United Nations General Assembly were an opportunity for Member States and multilaterals to affirm commitments to health and well-being for all. At the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28), the adoption of a ministerial declaration on climate and health by over 148 countries marked a significant milestone, along with the first COP Health Day, emphasizing the need to protect communities and prepare health systems to cope with climate-related health impacts.

At the same time, the world continued to face profound turbulence arising from multiple crises, including armed conflicts, climate emergencies, the enduring effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and proliferating disease outbreaks, which are disrupting health systems and setting back health and development gains. New World Bank data shows that by 2050, a warmer climate could result in at least 21 million additional deaths from just five health risks.¹ Violence, stigma and discrimination against key and vulnerable populations, including LGBTI people, is on the rise, in many cases exacerbated by draconian legislation, putting the historic 10-10-10 targets of the 2021 Political Declaration on HIV in peril. Communities themselves were on the frontlines, confronting human rights violations and inequalities that impede access to healthcare, increase risk and ultimately cost lives. Antimicrobial resistance is on the rise, non-communicable diseases threaten to overwhelm health systems and already stark inequalities are deepening. And though science has delivered new life-saving tools, including for HIV prevention, malaria and neglected tropical diseases, inequitable access remains a major barrier to saving millions more lives.

Against this backdrop, UNDP continued to support countries and communities to accelerate and scale action on health-related SDGs and the pledge to leave no one behind. Working closely with governments, civil society, multilaterals and other partners, UNDP helped deliver innovative and inclusive solutions with science, equity and access at their core. Millions of people continued to receive life-saving treatment and services through UNDP's longstanding partnership with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. UNDP and partners supported community-led organizations to remove barriers to HIV services and worked with governments to create enabling legal and policy environments. Multi-sectoral investment cases on non-communicable diseases, tobacco control, mental health and air pollution demonstrated the social and economic potential of action on health. And innovative, integrated solutions, such as digital health platforms and Smart Health Facilities, strengthened health systems, driving greater access and equity.

2024 marks the midpoint in implementation of both the UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025 and the UNDP HIV and Health Strategy 2022-2025, *Connecting the dots: Towards a more equitable, healthier and sustainable future*. In a world that demands greater solidarity, ambition, investment and action, UNDP's commitment to supporting countries and communities to realize the promise of Agenda 2030 is unwavering. Amid increasing turbulence and risk, UNDP continues to expand its work with partners across sectors to stay and deliver, connect the dots and reach the furthest behind. As we navigate challenges together, we will continue to elevate inclusive community leadership and solidarity, support resilient and future-smart health systems and prioritize innovation, sustainability and equity. These actions are imperative for a healthier future for all.

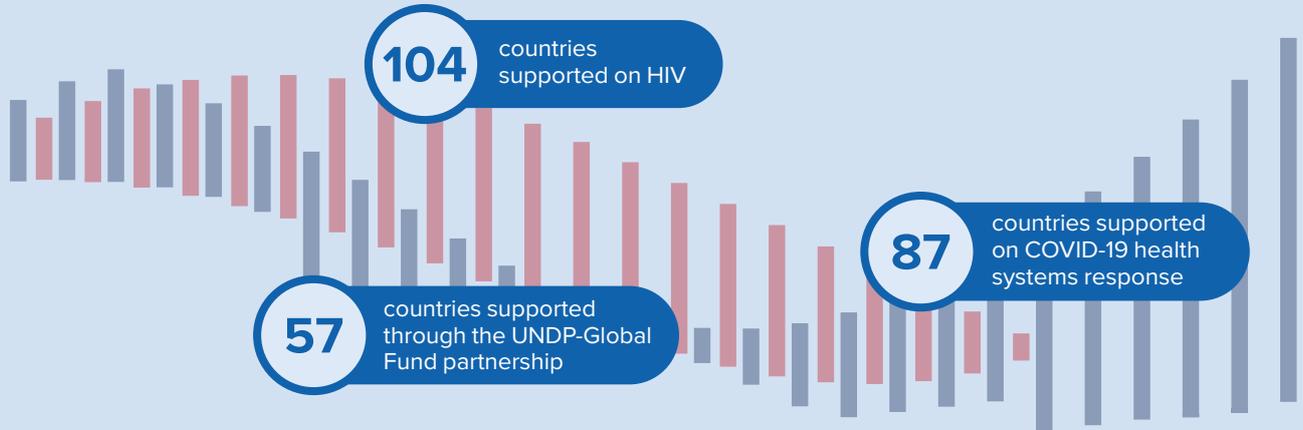
Mandeep Dhaliwal

Director, HIV and Health Group

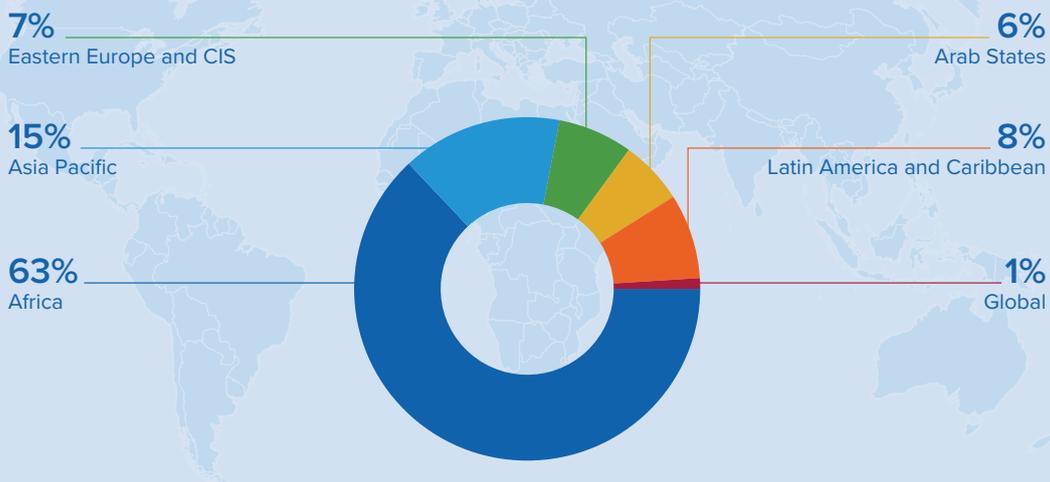
United Nations Development Programme

UNDP HIV AND HEALTH PORTFOLIO

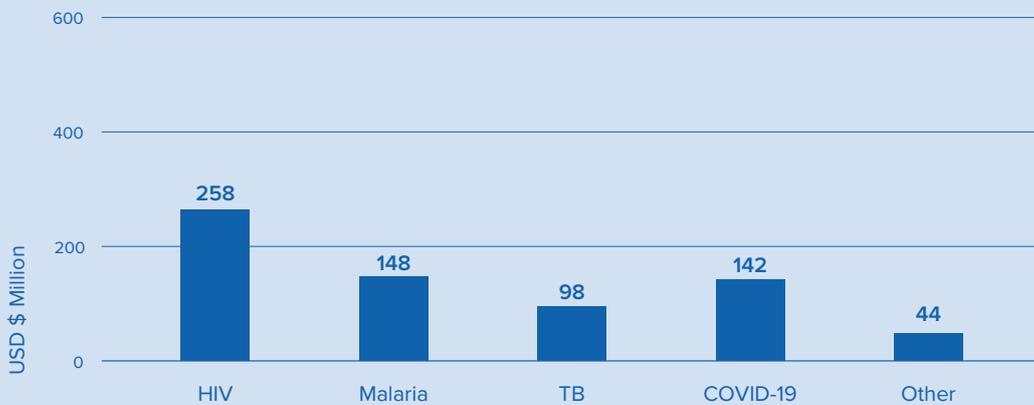
UNDP worked on HIV and health in **148 countries**



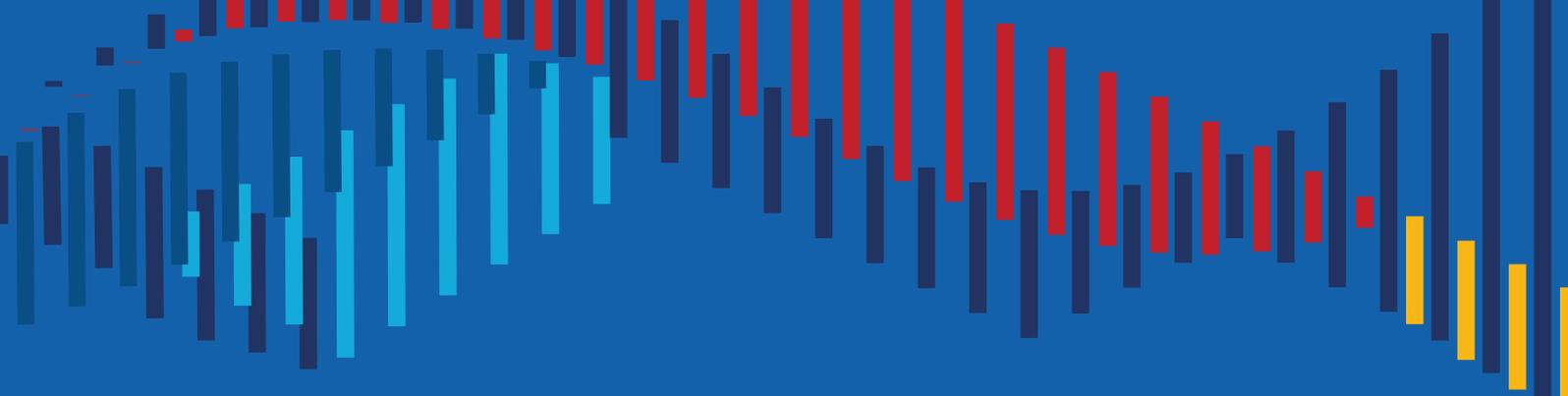
Expenditure by region



Expenditure by disease



*These figures illustrate 2022 financial reporting data.



INTRODUCTION

Science, equity and access – keys to unlocking Sustainable Development Goal acceleration

The year 2023 presented new opportunities to galvanize action to deliver progress for people and planet. Despite recent setbacks wrought by the persistent effects of COVID-19 and other crises, the past year offered a glimpse of what is possible, necessary and achievable in delivering on the ambition of Agenda 2030. It became clearer than ever that accelerating progress and delivering results requires innovative approaches that have science, equity and access at their core.

More than a quarter of the global population lives in settings beset by protracted conflict, poverty and lack of access to basic services.² Rapid progress on SDG 3: good health and well-being is essential to eradicate poverty and inequalities, yet poverty and inequality drive poor health outcomes. Health is both a driver and outcome of sustainable development.

UNDP's SDG Insights Reports illustrates multiple pathways for countries and communities to achieve their development goals. Indonesia, for example, has the potential to extend universal health care to remote areas through the scaling of digital health solutions. This would also benefit multiple SDGs, including those related to energy, decent jobs and education.

By partnering with key population-led organizations, civil society, national governments, the Global Fund and others, UNDP has helped to sustain and scale up more equitable HIV and health responses. In Zimbabwe, with support from UNDP, civil society leaders recommended changes for evidence- and rights-based laws, policies and health services for key and vulnerable populations. Strengthening communities and improving their access to justice, services and education are critical both to accelerate SDG action and to sustain HIV responses.

This kind of support is critical when crises threaten lives, livelihoods and development progress. In Sudan, UNDP supported community-led efforts to sustain life-saving treatment for people living with HIV after violence erupted in April 2023. In Haiti, UNDP, the Global Fund, United Nations partners and civil society helped to expand malaria prevention, treatment and education, especially in southwest Haiti where malaria is most prevalent.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of digital inclusion as a determinant of health and showed how digital inclusion can accelerate progress across multiple SDGs. Bridging the digital divide is essential to advance equity and build more resilient and sustainable systems for health. In 2023, UNDP supported 88 countries on digital health and, building on its partnership with WHO and others, launched its Digital Health for Development Hub to scale support for countries and communities to address inequalities that drive disease and pandemics.

Science and innovation will only become more critical as we progress toward 2030, and ensuring access and equity is fundamental to delivering on the commitment to leave no one behind.

This annual report is not exhaustive – it presents highlights from UNDP's work in HIV and Health in 2023. It covers three main action areas as outlined in UNDP's HIV and Health Strategy 2022-2025: Connecting the Dots: Towards a More Equitable, Healthier and Sustainable Future. These are: 1) reducing inequalities and social exclusion that affect health and drive pandemics; 2) promoting effective and inclusive governance for health; and 3) building resilient and sustainable systems for health.



REDUCING INEQUALITIES AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION THAT AFFECT HEALTH AND DRIVE PANDEMICS

In 2023, UNDP supported:

- » **65** countries on gender equality and gender-based violence
- » **97** countries on key populations
- » **84** countries on LGBTI rights and inclusion
- » **31** countries on HIV-sensitive social protection programmes

Every year, an estimated 5.6 million people die in poor countries due to lack of health care access³ and every day inequality contributes to the loss of more than 21,300 lives. The commitment to “leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind first” is at the core of the 2030 Agenda and is critical to achieving and accelerating progress on the SDGs. UNDP is unequivocal in its support for efforts that reduce inequalities and social inclusion to deliver on this promise, including those that affect health and drive pandemics.

In its role as a UNAIDS co-sponsor, UNDP works with communities and countries to protect and promote human rights and inclusion, advance gender equality, reduce stigma and discrimination and scale HIV prevention among key populations. UNDP supports local capacity development and country ownership through rights-based and gender-sensitive multi-sectoral AIDS plans and partners with people living with HIV and key populations most at risk of HIV and TB.

Promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls

Several factors drive inequality – among them are poverty, gender-based violence, social exclusion and multiple vulnerabilities that have a negative impact on health and development. In addition, gender inequality has direct implications for women’s and girls’ risks of acquiring HIV. To wit, adolescent girls and young women in sub-Saharan Africa are three times more likely to acquire HIV than their male peers. In 2023, UNDP worked with 65 countries to promote gender equality, empower women and girls and tackle gender-based violence.

Empowering women and girls and changing discriminatory norms

Working in partnership with the Association of People Living with HIV in the Central African Republic, UNDP countered the stigmatization and discrimination experienced by people living with HIV, survivors of gender-based violence and sex workers. Through this effort, 100 vulnerable women living with HIV and victims of gender-based violence improved their income generation skills and knowledge.

UNDP supported the NAWARA Women’s network, active in nine countries in the Middle East and North Africa, to help vulnerable women. Established in 2019, NAWARA has grown significantly, and in 2023 UNDP supported the development of the network’s first strategic plan, including undertaking a donor landscape review and scoping of resource mobilization opportunities.

Tackling gender-based violence

In 2023, with UNDP support, Liberia launched the National Gender-Based Violence Accountability Framework. This framework will help ensure policies, guidance and resources are in place for key stakeholders addressing gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Following an outbreak of violence in Sudan in April 2023, UNDP supported the country to formulate a Gender Assessment to help gender-based violence survivors gain access to the medical care they require. Recommendations from the assessment, which included ensuring that survivors have access to essential health services and psychosocial support and the urgent need to train health workers, were integrated into Sudan's HIV funding request submitted to the Global Fund.

In Grenada, UNDP, UN Women, PAHO and UNICEF supported the government to prepare a Gender-Based Violence Victims' and Survivors' Rights Policy and organized capacity-building for first responders from the police, justice, health and social sectors to strengthen survivor-centred responses.

Ensuring inclusion of key populations at risk of HIV and other excluded groups

In 2022, there was a 90 percent funding gap for prevention among key populations at risk of HIV, including gay men and other men who have sex with men, transgender people, sex workers, people who use drugs and prisoners.⁴ Barriers, such as police harassment, societal discrimination and insufficient community-based services are impeding prevention and treatment for key populations.





In 2022, 55 percent of all new HIV infections occurred among key populations and their sexual partners – an increase from 2010 when the estimated proportion was 44 percent.⁵ While new HIV infections declined by 35 percent in this period in the overall adult population, they only declined by 11 percent among key populations and their sexual partners, in part due to inequitable access to safe, effective and quality HIV services and high levels of stigma, discrimination, violence, human rights violations and criminalization.

Building on the recommendations of the Global Commission on HIV and the Law, UNDP supports countries and communities to overcome these barriers and drive progress on the 10-10-10 targets. In 2023, that included working with 97 countries on advancing inclusion for key populations.

Supporting key population leadership and action on HIV

The UNDP-led SCALE Initiative awarded grants to 33 organizations led by people living with HIV and other key populations in 16 countries: Angola, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Guyana, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Namibia, Nepal, Panama, Philippines, South Africa, Tajikistan, Thailand and Zambia. Through these grants, organizations are working to counter discriminatory laws, policies and practices and HIV-related criminalization, all of which hinder access to HIV services. The grants also advance the work of these organizations by strengthening key population leadership, expanding partnerships and increasing solidarity among communities at local, national and regional levels.

Advancing LGBTI rights and inclusion

UNDP supports LGBTI inclusion through work with governments, United Nations organizations, academia, the private sector and civil society partners. In 2023, UNDP worked with 84 countries to advance LGBTI rights and inclusion.

Following the successful piloting in 2022 of the LGBTI Inclusion Index, developed by UNDP in partnership with academia, the World Bank and United Nations and civil society partners, pilot projects taking place in Georgia and Viet Nam are increasing the visibility of LGBTI communities and facilitating dialogue that can improve the rights of LGBTI people, despite challenging social environments. Ecuador completed its own LGBTI Inclusion Index pilot in 2023. UNDP secured funding to support a second phase of the LGBTI Inclusion Index to further build national stakeholder capacity in data collection.

Strengthening inclusive social protection

Inclusive social protection that leaves no one behind is key to reducing poverty, gender and income inequalities and social exclusion. Interventions include food assistance, vouchers, cash, health insurance, employment assistance and other forms of social care and support. And yet 55 percent of the world's population has no access to social protection.

In 2023, UNDP supported 31 countries on HIV-sensitive social protection programmes. This continues UNDP's work in promoting social protection for key and vulnerable populations to improve access to health services, including HIV services, and to increase resilience and reduce risk.

Ensuring equitable social protection benefits for key populations

The UNDP-ILO Social Protection Programme worked with Zambia's National AIDS Council and partners to mainstream social protection in HIV programmes, promoting open dialogue on the need to address gaps for key populations in accessing HIV and other sexual and reproductive health and rights and services. In Somalia, UNDP supported the integration of recommendations from the HIV Sensitive Social Protection Assessment (2022) into Somalia's HIV funding request to the Global Fund. This led to funding allocations to register all people living with HIV at the federal level on the Unified Social Register. More than 2,400 women, men and children living with HIV in Somalia are expected to benefit.

In partnership with the World Food Programme and civil society organizations, UNDP supported social protection programmes in the Dominican Republic to boost key population inclusion, including through representation in the consultative council of the Social Cabinet and by agreeing to modify the social protection registry to include sexual orientation and gender identity in the personal classification and sex work among occupations.

Promoting the rights and empowerment of persons with disabilities

People with disabilities are often identified as one of the most marginalized groups. Access to knowledge is a fundamental determinant of health and a basic human right, which the Marrakesh Treaty envisions to realize through legal reforms at the global and national levels. After Viet Nam's historic accession to the Marrakesh Treaty in December 2022, UNDP has been assisting the government and disability communities in that country to prepare decrees to implement the Treaty, with two decrees issued in 2023 that help to realize the treaty provisions on benefits for persons with disabilities.





PROMOTING EFFECTIVE AND INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE FOR HEALTH

In 2023, UNDP supported:

- » **96** countries on HIV and tuberculosis related rights
- » **89** countries on non-communicable disease prevention and control governance
- » **51** countries on health financing and governance
- » **90** countries on access to medicines

December 2023 marked the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The rights enshrined in this document offer a roadmap for creating inclusive, multisectoral governance that meaningfully engages communities and promotes good health and well-being for all. Yet the world is off track. Sustained pushback on human rights and gender equality, combined with shrinking civic space, threaten the health and development of the very communities whose efforts make progress possible.

Yet, there are signs of hope. The world has committed to accelerate progress to ensure that fewer countries have punitive legal and policy environments by 2025, in the form of the 10-10-10 targets of the 2021 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS.⁶ As learned in a recent [joint report](#)⁷ (UNDP, the HIV Policy Lab, Georgetown University and GNP+), more countries removed punitive same-sex sex laws in 2022 than in any single year in the past 25 years. A new Evidence Review, [Pathways to Achieving the Global 10-10-10 HIV Targets](#),⁸ documents examples of community-led action to reform punitive and discriminatory laws.

It is in this context that UNDP continues to support countries to advance enabling legal, policy and regulatory environments and more sustainable HIV and health financing.

Enabling legal, policy and regulatory environments for HIV and health

Successful strategies for HIV prevention, treatment, care and support require supportive legal, regulatory and social environments that advance human rights, gender equality and justice. Punishing and stigmatizing environments, in contrast, increase people's vulnerability to HIV infection and reduce access to and use of HIV and health services. People living with or at risk of HIV often acutely feel the negative impacts of punitive legal and social environments.

In contrast, enabling legal and policy environments – frameworks consisting of supportive laws, law enforcement and access to justice – can promote access to HIV-related information and services and support risk reduction. UNDP, together with governments, civil society, other United Nations bodies and partners, continues to support countries to advance the recommendations of the independent Global Commission on HIV and the Law. In 2023, UNDP supported 96 countries on HIV- and tuberculosis (TB)-related rights.



Supporting enabling environments for HIV and health responses

UNDP, together with UNAIDS and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, supported the installation of an LGBTI Rights Observatory, comprising LGBTI organizations, in the Ombudsperson's Office in Panama. In the Philippines, UNDP created the Leader and Governance Programme to reinforce the national HIV response and to facilitate more adaptive programming. This includes partnering with LGBTI and other civil society groups to finance gender-responsive approaches to the HIV response.

In April 2023, together with the Global Fund, UNAIDS, civil society and LGBTI groups, UNDP contributed to the efforts of legislators in the Cook Islands to decriminalize consensual sex between men. In Kenya, UNDP provided support to the HIV Tribunal to induct new board members, with a focus on strengthening the rule of law through access to justice and protection of human rights, particularly for people living with HIV, individuals with disabilities and other key populations. UNDP also supported the Kenya Legal and Ethical Issues Network to conduct research on access to sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls living with HIV. The research highlighted concerns among people living with HIV, particularly women, about coercive medical practices in health care facilities.

Empowering communities to respond to HIV-related criminalization and discrimination

Since 2021, UNDP, with funding from the Global Fund, has been supporting the roll-out of the community-led [REACT system in Tajikistan](#). REACT has trained eight non-governmental organizations in Tajikistan to identify human rights violations,

resulting in over 2,000 registered offences since 2020. In 2023, 130 offences in a range of cases were swiftly addressed, many of which involved violations against individuals living with HIV.

In Pakistan, UNDP supported the establishment legal aid desks in four provinces to improve access to justice for key populations and for people living with or at risk of HIV. To date, 731 cases of legal assistance in Punjab and Sindh Provinces have been reported and key populations have accessed the legal aid desks to seek legal aid services.

Supporting HIV decriminalization, human rights and drug policy reform

UNDP convenes annual regional judges' forums to improve knowledge and judicial ethics, and ensure compliance with international legal standards, especially regarding cases related to HIV and the law. The Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) region is among three in the world where HIV infections and deaths are still on the rise, and 15 countries in the region still criminalize HIV transmission. In 2023, UNDP held the [Fifth EECA Regional Judges' Forum](#) in Chisinau, Moldova, which focused on HIV decriminalization and drug policy reform. The Forum helped foster judicial sensitization and engagement on HIV and human rights in the region.

At the Africa Regional Judges' Forum (Anglophone), held in Johannesburg in partnership with the Southern Africa Litigation Centre, judges shared their experiences and the challenges in advancing the equality, health and rights of LGBTI and key populations in Africa. At the 5th Caribbean Judges Forum on HIV, Human Rights and the Law held in Trinidad and Tobago a key outcome was a request for UNDP to support the judiciary's role in promoting the human rights of all persons.



Fifth EECA Judges Forum on HIV, Human Rights and the Law

27-28 November 2023

Chisinau, Moldova

Improving access to health technologies

Following WHO's recommendation on the RTS,S malaria vaccine in 2021,⁹ the UNDP-led Access and Delivery Partnership (ADP) (a collaboration between WHO, the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases and the global health non-profit PATH) began to support access and delivery of the malaria vaccine across 13 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. To address implementation and operational barriers during its pilot introduction, Ghana adopted the ADP value chain approach to plan for access and delivery of the vaccine.

Supported by the Helmsley Charitable Trust, UNDP is helping to improve access to treatment and care for individuals with diabetes and other NCDs in low- and middle-income countries. Investment Case and Legal Environment Assessment guidance was developed to integrate legal and policy reforms with investment approaches and are currently being piloted in Malawi and Uganda in partnership with their ministries of health.

Strengthening governance, including to address non-communicable diseases, mental health and accelerate tobacco control

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including mental health conditions, are the leading cause of death and disability worldwide, with low- and middle-income countries bearing a significant burden. UNDP efforts to address NCDs and tobacco control extend beyond the health sector, acknowledging the critical role of other sectors in achieving health and well-being. This approach aligns with UNDP's commitment to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities, promote effective and inclusive governance and establish resilient and sustainable health systems. In 2023, UNDP supported 89 countries on NCD prevention and control governance.

Highlighting linkages between tobacco and mental health

Through investment cases in Cambodia, China, Lao PDR and the Philippines, UNDP highlighted the links between tobacco use and mental health.¹⁰ The analysis points to the urgent need to address the increasing double burden of tobacco use and mental health conditions, especially among marginalized and vulnerable populations, such as low-income individuals, the LGBTI community, persons with disabilities and indigenous people.

Addressing NCDs and tobacco control for sustainable development

In Uganda, UNDP supported the capacity building of parliament on legislation, appropriation and advocacy related to NCDs and development. Following this support, parliament passed the Public Health Act, which included NCDs. In Suriname, UNDP, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Secretariat and the Pan American Health Organization worked with the Ministry of Health to finalize a Tobacco Control Strategy to advance implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in the country.

Emphasizing NCDs in the Healthy Cities Initiative

In 2023, UNDP partnered with the Alliance of Mayors and municipal leaders on an HIV and Health Initiative in Africa that champions advocacy and action for progress on NCDs as part of implementing the WHO Healthy Cities Initiative.¹¹ Building on the work of ten cities in 2022, UNDP expanded efforts in Jinja and Mbale in Uganda, integrating NCDs into local development workplans and advocacy to sensitize local communities on NCD prevention. The initiative was spearheaded by mayors, town clerks and other local leaders.

Enhancing sustainable financing for HIV and health

Slow economic growth, high inflation and increased debt servicing costs mean public health spending could decrease in the coming years, especially in poorer countries.¹² Low-income countries are currently allocating 1.4 times more funds to debt servicing than to health.¹³ While greater international financial cooperation can bridge short-term funding gaps, governments must prioritize health in their own spending for a sustainable path forward.

More efficient and equitable spending is needed to promote decisions that increase investments in health. Making improvements in how public finances are managed, for example, can give ministries of finance and parliaments greater confidence that additional funds for health are spent well. Introducing or increasing taxes on health damaging products, such as alcohol, tobacco and sugar-sweetened beverages, can both improve health outcomes and raise revenue. UNDP worked with 51 countries on health financing in 2023.

Strengthening social contracting and social return on investment

In 2023, UNDP worked with governments and partners in the Eastern European and Central Asia and Middle East and North Africa regions to strengthen legal frameworks and practical tools for non-governmental organization social contracting to deliver life-saving health and social services. Facilitated by UNDP, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Ukraine exchanged knowledge and experience on social contracting for HIV and health with Algeria, Morocco and Tunis.

To highlight the benefits of governments working in partnership with civil society, UNDP worked jointly with the Algerian Ministry of Health and non-governmental organizations that provide HIV services to key populations in the country to prepare an HIV Social Return on Investment Case Study.

Modelling health taxes to unlock Sustainable Development Goal progress

UNDP is conducting modelling and policy analyses on taxes and health with 13 countries: Armenia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Colombia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Lao PDR, Malawi, Thailand, Uganda, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe. In Armenia, UNDP's analysis and subsequent capacity building support for the Ministry of Finance contributed to a legislative change which increased tobacco taxes. In Ghana, a health tax policy brief prepared by the United Nations, government, civil society and academia contributed to the passing of the country's new Excise Tax Law. In Zimbabwe, the National Budget statement incorporated UNDP's recommendation to introduce a sugar-sweetened beverage tax.



Photo: UNDP India

BUILDING RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS FOR HEALTH

In 2023, UNDP supported:

- » **57** countries on the UNDP-Global Fund Partnership
- » **59** countries on the nexus of health, environment and climate
- » **19** countries on solar for health and smart facilities
- » **88** countries on digital in the health sector

UNDP helps countries build resilient and sustainable systems for health. Intersecting crises, such as conflict, climate challenges and pandemics, threaten health and development progress. Over the last 12 months, [170,000 reported COVID-19 deaths](#) and more than 2.5 million excess deaths continued to stall global efforts to reduce inequalities and poverty. Studies suggest a high risk of another pandemic as deadly as COVID-19 occurring within the next decade.¹⁴ What's more, at least 40 percent of the global population lives in areas highly vulnerable to climate change.¹⁵

UNDP works with countries to scale innovative and multi-sectoral approaches that can strengthen systems for health to address not only the health of humans, but also the health of societies and the planet. Building the resilience of countries to prevent and mitigate the risks of crises and conflict underpins UNDP's work on HIV and health; it likewise requires a commitment to accelerating the energy transition and digital solutions that can drive universal health coverage.

Implementation support and capacity development for large-scale health programmes

In 2023, UNDP and partners continued to support governments to implement large-scale health programmes, particularly in challenging operating environments. This includes through UNDP's long-standing partnership with the Global Fund, which plays a key role in supporting countries to foster greater equity by accelerating the fight against HIV, TB and malaria epidemics.

Saving lives in partnership with the Global Fund

UNDP has partnered with the Global Fund for more than two decades to support and strengthen national responses to HIV, TB and malaria, assisting countries to implement large-scale health programmes, reach some of the most hard-to-reach populations and strengthen the ability of institutions to deliver essential services in challenging and high-risk country contexts. UNDP is currently managing 28 Global Fund grants in 20 countries and two regional programmes covering 11 countries.

Through the partnership, UNDP continues to deliver results at scale in support of disease responses. Results for 2023 include:

- » Providing 1.68 million people with antiretroviral treatment for HIV and supporting more than 3.1 million HIV tests
- » Distributing 13.65 million bed nets, treating more than 10 million people for malaria and providing preventative malaria treatment to more than 800,000 pregnant women
- » Treating 84,000 people for tuberculosis

Helping countries achieve digital transformation for health

UNDP supported 88 countries on digital health during 2023. In Montenegro and Serbia, UNDP, in collaboration with WHO and national partners, supported the digitalization of health systems, including the establishment of a universal approach to data management at all levels. The Ukraine Ministry of Health Care requested UNDP support to further develop their e-Health system that manages data and processes in the healthcare sector and is the biggest public information system in the country.



Photo: UNDP Indonesia



In 2023, UNDP launched its [Digital Health for Development Hub](#) as a one-stop-shop for technical and advisory support to help countries adopt and scale digital health solutions. The Hub builds on UNDP's partnerships and work in the area, which began by building digital platforms for routine immunization and COVID-19 vaccination programmes in India and expanded to other countries, including Bhutan, Indonesia and Malawi with a focus on South-South transfer of knowledge and technical know-how.

Using “smart” health to bring reliable energy, innovation and technology to health systems

Systems for health that embrace reliable energy, innovation and technology are transforming healthcare around the world. As a major part of this transformation, Smart Health Facilities are using modern technology and innovations to improve efficiency of health infrastructure and services. UNDP is supporting three uses of Smart Health Facilities: warehouse and storage settings with remote monitoring capability; health care delivery using solar energy systems and diagnostics; and data systems to support disease surveillance, health management information systems and health care waste management. With support from the Global Fund and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, UNDP implemented Smart Health Facility solutions in Guinea-Bissau, India, Indonesia, São Tomé and Príncipe, South Sudan and Uganda.

Planetary health, including climate, energy and health

Planetary health emphasizes that human health is intricately connected to that of natural systems within the Earth's biosphere. It contends that the health of all species, including humans, depends on the biodiversity and stability of entire systems. The planetary health approach addresses the broader social, environmental and economic impacts on the health of people and planet. It also provides a crucial framework for accelerating progress on the SDGs, ensuring that no one is left behind. UNDP worked with 59 countries in 2023 on this nexus of health, environment and climate.

Making the case for policy solutions for air pollution

UNDP supported Ethiopia, India and Mongolia to develop air pollution investment cases, revealing the economic, health and environmental burden of air pollution and calculating the return on investment for priority interventions. UNDP also supported legal environment assessments and the review of over 60 laws, norms and regulations impacting pollution in the three countries. In Ethiopia, the results showed that household air pollution attributable morbidity and mortality cost \$3.9 billion per year, or 4 percent of GDP in 2019; environmental losses totalled \$2.2 billion. Ethiopia and Mongolia prepared legal environmental assessments for health and pollution, highlighting gaps in existing laws and proposing areas for legal reform. Mongolia has developed a multisectoral action plan to improve health and reduce pollution.



Improving health-care waste management

To help prevent the negative impacts of health-care waste on human and environmental health, especially given the greater volumes produced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP supported Bangladesh, Bhutan and the Maldives to access equipment to better handle increased health-care waste production. In Bangladesh, 283 staff members were trained to support the 26 healthcare facilities that will receive equipment to handle health-care waste production more effectively. In Bhutan, 112 healthcare facilities across 15 districts received needed equipment. In the Maldives, UNDP helped strengthen health-care waste management systems and capacities in facilities across 18 islands.

Building the resilience of health systems to climate change

Today, natural disasters and increasing disease burdens threaten systems for health across the world. “Building Resilience of Health Systems in Asian Least Developed Countries to Climate Change,” a collaborative effort of UNDP, WHO and the Global Environment Facility, supports government efforts in six Asian countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal and Timor-Leste) to increase the adaptive capacity of their national health systems. The collaboration also supports sub-national actors to manage long-term climate-related health risks.

In Namibia, UNDP continued to focus on the Solar 4 Health to enable climate-resilient and low-emission health services. This was done through increased access to sustainable and reliable renewable energy in up to 317 public healthcare facilities in Namibia. This included supporting the integration of health surveillance and early warning systems for climate sensitive diseases and pandemics.

Helping secure financing to implement climate-health commitments

UNDP, the Green Climate Fund and WHO launched an initiative to ramp up support for developing countries to mitigate and respond to the impacts of climate change on health. Covering 15 countries in Africa, Asia and Southeastern Europe, the Climate and Health Co-Investment Facility is a unique financing mechanism that will leverage public and private capital to promote climate resilient, sustainable and low-carbon systems for health. The Facility will assist countries to implement their health commitments made at COP26, including through the WHO’s Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH), an alliance using the collective power of WHO Member States and other stakeholders, including UNDP, to realize the COP26 ambition of building climate-resilient and sustainable health systems.



Pandemic preparedness

COVID-19 showed that in all countries, rich and poor, there is a crucial need to invest in being prepared to respond to pandemics. Across the globe, building resilient and sustainable health systems that reach all people, especially the most vulnerable, is essential. With ecosystems being reshaped by deforestation, urbanization and rising global temperatures, animals and humans are forced into closer contact, raising the potential for zoonotic diseases and pandemic risks. Being better equipped to deal with future pandemics requires integrating health, environmental and climate strategies and grounding them in equitable access.

Leveraging disaster risk reduction expertise for epidemic preparedness

UNDP and the WHO European Centre for Humanitarian and Health Emergencies initiated exploratory work across the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region to address the links between climate and health emergencies, leveraging UNDP's work on disaster risk reduction and advancing early warning systems for disasters response and pandemics. UNDP also worked with the Mayors for Sustainable Growth, a joint European Union-UNDP initiative, to integrate health and pandemic preparedness in the urban resilience agenda.

Improving capacities and infrastructure for preparedness

UNDP worked with the Federal Ministry of Health of Sudan, WHO and humanitarian non-governmental organizations to deploy nine mobile primary health care centres to remote, hard-to-reach areas, including for internally displaced people. UNDP also supported the rehabilitation of the health system by providing supplies and equipment for laboratory diagnostics and solar energy installations at

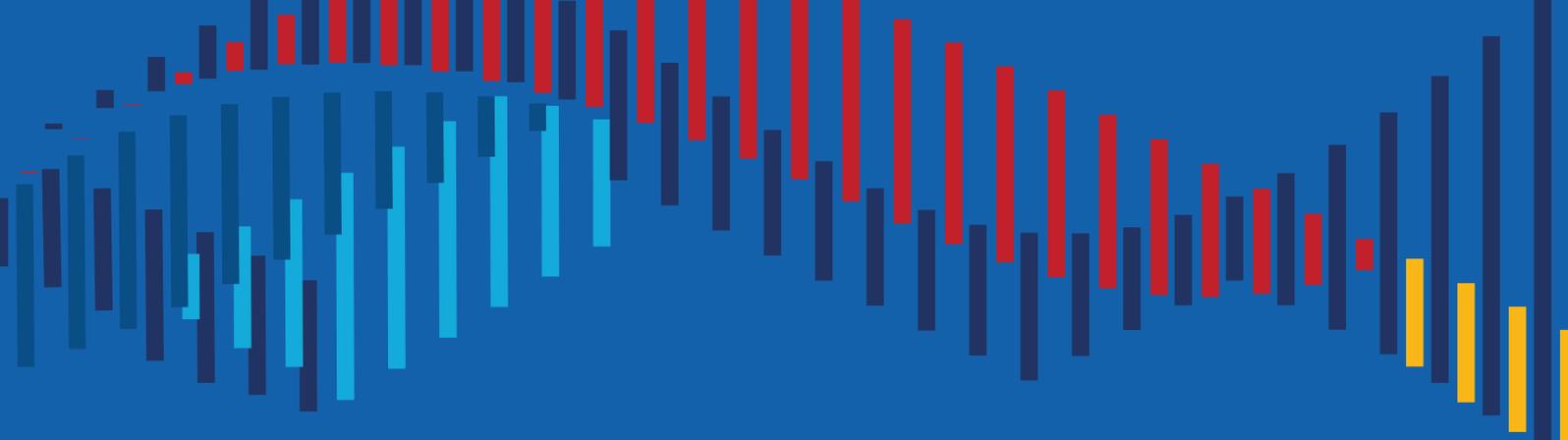
110 health facilities. In Uganda, to strengthen the national response to emergencies and recovery from COVID-19, UNDP supported the development of an integrated disaster management information system. In Mozambique, UNDP partnered with the Islamic Development Bank to expand health centres in response to COVID-19. UNDP is also working alongside Mozambique's Ministry of Health and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, to strengthen waste management policies.

Investing in pandemic preparedness

In 2023, COVID-19 Response Mechanism (C19RM) funding from the Global Fund was utilized to strengthen country and community capacity to prepare for and respond to pandemics. In Burundi, 1,200 community health workers from key and Indigenous populations were trained on epidemic surveillance and human rights. In Guinea-Bissau, UNDP supported the strengthening of entomological surveillance of malaria, including of the *Anopheles stephensi* mosquito, originally native to South Asia and parts of the Arabian Peninsula and which thrives in urban areas, which is spreading across Africa, and surveillance of other epidemic prone diseases, such as Mpox, Ebola and COVID-19. In Pakistan, ten oxygen plants were completed, and more are in development, to increase access and better prepare public hospitals to respond to health emergencies.

In the Western Pacific region, reaching everyone equally, particularly in remote areas with limited access to healthcare services, remains a challenge both for the TB response and broader pandemic preparedness efforts. To address this disparity, UNDP procured mini portable x-ray systems with advanced artificial intelligence software for the Ministries of Health in the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, with additional equipment on the way for Palau and Tonga. These portable x-ray machines and AI software have significantly improved the efficiency of TB screening, making it possible to screen for TB rapidly and accurately in the most remote areas.





ENDNOTES

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