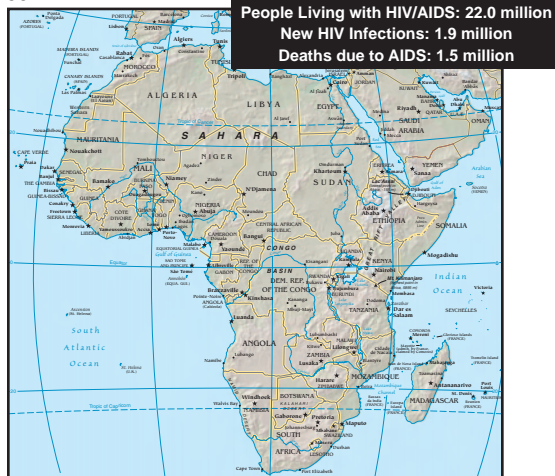


### The HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa

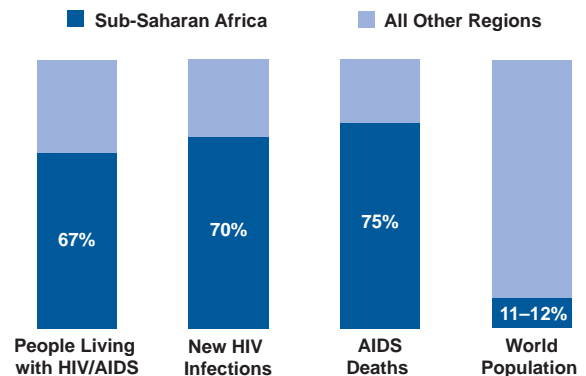
July 2008

The HIV/AIDS epidemic has had its most profound impact to date in sub-Saharan Africa. The majority of people living with HIV/AIDS (67%), new HIV infections (70%), and AIDS-related deaths (75%) are in this region, which only accounts for about 11–12% of the world's population.<sup>1,2</sup> HIV is the leading cause of death in the region and studies have found declines in life expectancy due to HIV in many of the hardest hit countries in sub-Saharan Africa, especially those in southern Africa.<sup>1</sup> There are more than 5 million people living with HIV in South Africa alone, the greatest number of any country in the world, and Swaziland has the world's highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate (the percent of the population living with HIV/AIDS)<sup>1,3</sup> Almost all countries in sub-Saharan Africa have generalized epidemics; that is, their prevalence rates are greater than 1%, and, in 9 countries, rates exceed 10%.<sup>1,3</sup> Women comprise the majority of those living with HIV/AIDS in the region,<sup>4</sup> and young people are at particular risk.<sup>1</sup> The epidemic has already posed serious development challenges for the region, where most countries are already considered to be low-income and heavily or moderately indebted, according to the World Bank,<sup>5</sup> affecting communities, families, livelihoods, and numerous sectors of society.<sup>1,6</sup> Some of these countries also face other challenges that may exacerbate or be exacerbated by HIV, including food insecurity, internal migration, and conflict. Yet the epidemic is quite diverse throughout sub-Saharan Africa and, despite these challenges, there have been success stories and even new, encouraging signs. The latest estimates from UNAIDS and WHO indicate that in most sub-Saharan African countries, HIV/AIDS prevalence has stabilized, although often at high levels.<sup>1</sup> In addition, some countries have even begun to experience declines.<sup>1</sup> Finally, there is evidence of reduced risk behavior in some parts of the region.<sup>1</sup> Most countries in sub-Saharan Africa have developed national responses to HIV/AIDS through National AIDS Commissions, legislation, programs, and services.<sup>7,8</sup>

**Figure 1: Snapshot of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2007<sup>1</sup>**



**Figure 2: Sub-Saharan Africa as a Percent of the Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic, 2007<sup>1,2</sup>**



### Overview

- The first case of what was later identified as AIDS was officially reported in Africa in 1982.<sup>9,10</sup>
- As of the end of 2007, an estimated 22.0 million people were living with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, representing two-thirds (67%) of the global total of people living with HIV/AIDS.<sup>1</sup>
- The adult HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in sub-Saharan Africa was the highest of any region in the world (5.0% as of the end of 2007), and significantly higher than the global prevalence rate (0.8%).<sup>1,3</sup> However, the prevalence rate in sub-Saharan Africa has declined from 5.7% in 2001.<sup>1</sup>
- Of the 2.7 million new HIV infections estimated to occur worldwide in 2007, more than two thirds (70%) were in sub-Saharan Africa. An estimated 1.9 million people became infected with HIV in the region in 2007.<sup>1</sup>
- Also in 2007, there were an estimated 1.5 million deaths due to AIDS in the region, or three-quarters (75%) of all AIDS-related deaths worldwide.<sup>1</sup> HIV is the leading cause of death in Africa.<sup>1</sup>
- HIV in Africa is spread primarily through heterosexual sex, although transmission patterns vary across the region and within countries.<sup>1</sup>

### Populations and Regions Affected

- Women account for the majority of adults estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS in the region (59%).<sup>1,4</sup> Compared to other regions, the impact on women is the most pronounced in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>1</sup>
- Young people are at particular risk and young women are especially vulnerable. Among young people aged 15–24 in sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated 3.2% of women and 1.1% of men were living with HIV in 2007—an almost three-fold difference.<sup>1</sup> The impact on young people is exacerbated by the fact that the population of sub-Saharan Africa is quite young relative to other regions in the world, with 43% of the population below the age of 15 (compared to 28% globally).<sup>2</sup> But there are encouraging signs. Recent data indicate that HIV prevalence among young pregnant women attending antenatal clinics has declined in a number of countries with sufficient data for such analysis in the region and preliminary data from a few sub-Saharan African countries indicate reductions in risk behavior among young people.<sup>1</sup>

- Most children (under the age of 15) living with HIV/AIDS are in Sub-Saharan Africa (1.8 million), or 90% of the global total, as of the end of 2007, as are most (11.6 million) of the world's 15.0 million AIDS orphans.<sup>1,11,12</sup>
- The epidemic has had a varied impact across the region, with the most severe impact in southern Africa which includes the countries with the highest prevalence rates in the world.<sup>1</sup>

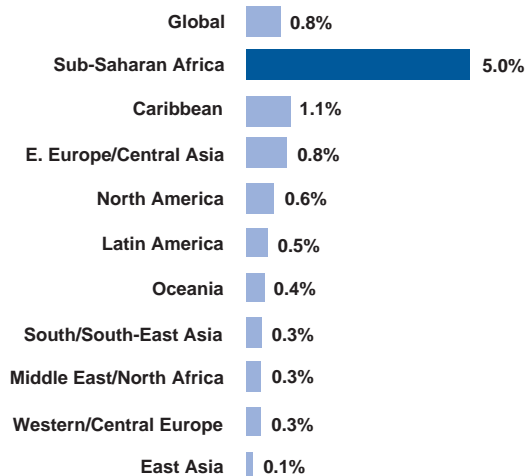
### Other Key Data

- **Prevention:** Recent estimates indicate that sub-Saharan Africa faces significant gaps in prevention. For example, among countries for which data were available, just 9.5% of women and 7.9% of men had ever received an HIV test and the results.<sup>13</sup> Also, it is estimated that only about a third (34%) of pregnant women with HIV in the region received antiretrovirals for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.<sup>13</sup>
- **Access to Antiretroviral Therapy (ART):** Access to ART has dramatically expanded in sub-Saharan Africa—an estimated 2.1 million people in the region were receiving ART as of December 2007, a more than twenty-fold increase since December 2003. Despite this progress, sub-Saharan Africa faces the greatest need for ART in the world. Only 30% of the 7.0 million people living with HIV/AIDS who need ART in the region currently have access to this treatment.<sup>13</sup>

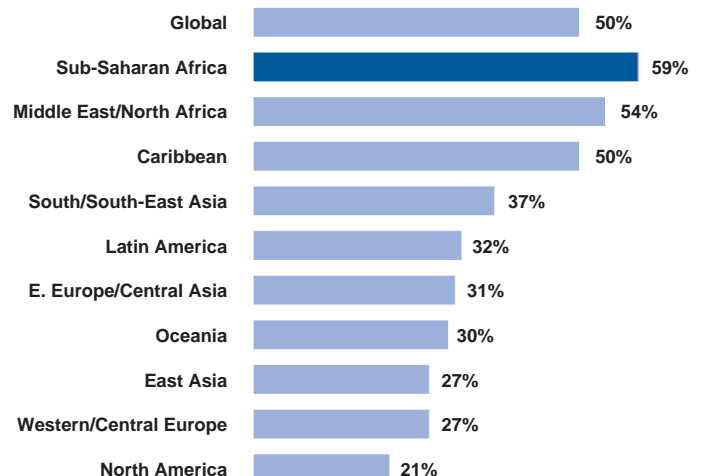
### International Support/Major Donors

- Numerous donor governments provide funding and other support to address HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, both through regional and country-specific efforts. Sub-Saharan Africa is a major focus of the United States Government's President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which provides most of its bilateral funding to 15 countries, 12 of which are in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>14</sup> U.S. bilateral aid for these 12 countries totaled \$2.5 billion in FY 2007.<sup>15</sup> The U.S. also provides funding for HIV/AIDS efforts around the world through its contributions to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (The Global Fund).
- The Global Fund has approved nearly 90 HIV/AIDS grants (including HIV/TB grants) in 38 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as multi-country grants, totaling \$4.2 billion in approved funding.<sup>16</sup>
- UNAIDS and its 10 co-sponsors support numerous HIV/AIDS programs, partnerships, and other activities throughout sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>8,17</sup> One of the biggest such funding efforts is the World Bank's Multi-Country HIV/AIDS Program (MAP) for Africa, launched in 2000; to date, MAP has committed \$1.5 billion in grant funding (\$1 billion has been disbursed) to 29 African countries and 4 sub-regional projects.<sup>18</sup>

**Figure 3: Percent of Adults Estimated to be Living with HIV/AIDS by Region, 2007<sup>1,3</sup>**



**Figure 4: Women as Percent of Adults (15+) Living with HIV/AIDS by Region, 2007<sup>1</sup>**



### Additional Resources/Websites

- African Council of AIDS Service Organizations (Africaso): [www.africaso.net](http://www.africaso.net)
- Southern African Network of AIDS Service Organisations (SANASO): [www.sanaso.org.zw](http://www.sanaso.org.zw)
- Southern Africa HIV/AIDS Information Dissemination Service (SAfAIDS): [www.saf aids.org.zw/index.cfm](http://www.saf aids.org.zw/index.cfm)
- UNAIDS, Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Page: <http://www.unaids.org/en/CountryResponses/Regions/SubSaharanAfrica.asp>
- World Bank, HIV/AIDS in Africa: [www.worldbank.org/afr/aids/](http://www.worldbank.org/afr/aids/)
- African Broadcast Media Partnership Against HIV/AIDS: [www.broadcasthivafrica.org](http://www.broadcasthivafrica.org)

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- 2 Population Reference Bureau, *2007 World Population Data Sheet*; 2007.
- 3 Among those between the ages of 15 and 49.
- 4 Among those aged 15 and over.
- 5 World Bank, "Country Classification:" [www.worldbank.org/data/countryclass/countryclass.html](http://www.worldbank.org/data/countryclass/countryclass.html).
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- 9 U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Update: Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) – Worldwide," *MMWR*, Vol. 37, No. 18; May 13, 1988.
- 10 Serwadda D et al., "Slim disease: a new disease in Uganda and its association with HTLV-III infection," *The Lancet*, Vol. 2; 1985.

- 11 Aged 0–17, living in 2007, who have lost one or both parents to AIDS.
- 12 UNAIDS/WHO, *Core Slides: Global Summary of the HIV and AIDS Epidemic, 2007*; 2008.
- 13 WHO/UNAIDS/UNICEF, *Towards Universal Access, Scaling Up Priority HIV/AIDS Interventions in the Health Sector, Progress Report*; June 2008.
- 14 The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief: [www.pepfar.gov](http://www.pepfar.gov).
- 15 The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, Country Profiles: <http://www.pepfar.gov/countries/c19418.htm>.
- 16 The Global Fund: [www.theglobalfund.org](http://www.theglobalfund.org).
- 17 UNAIDS, *UNAIDS at Country Level: Supporting Countries as They Move Towards Universal Access*; January 2007.
- 18 World Bank, "AIDS Regional Update: Africa:" [www.worldbank.org/afr/aids/overview.htm](http://www.worldbank.org/afr/aids/overview.htm).