



Living

IN A WORLD WITH HIV
Information for UN system
personnel and their families

www.uncares.org

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Whatever our role in life,
wherever we may live,
in some way or another,
we all live with HIV.
We are all affected by it.
We need to take responsibility
for the response.

— United Nations Secretary-General
Ban Ki-moon (from his message
on World AIDS Day, 1 December 2007)

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● ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome

HIV Human immunodeficiency virus

HPV Human papillomavirus

ILO International Labour Organization

TB Tuberculosis

UN United Nations

UNAIDS Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFPA United Nations Population Fund

UNHCR Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund

UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

WB World Bank

WFP World Food Programme

WHO World Health Organization



UNAIDS is an innovative joint venture of the United Nations, bringing together the efforts and resources of the UNAIDS Secretariat and ten UN system organizations in the AIDS response.

The Secretariat headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland—with staff on the ground in more than 80 countries.

The Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Contributing to achieving global commitments to universal access to comprehensive interventions for HIV prevention, treatment, care and support is the number one priority for UNAIDS.

● FOREWORD

“Living in a world with HIV” is more than a booklet—it is a lifesaving tool that should be required reading for every single member of the United Nations family, from Headquarters to the remotest duty stations.

The information contained in these pages is detailed and clear. It confronts the many subjects—some of them very intimate—that must be discussed in any rational response to HIV. As such, it is a fine example of the unflinching approach the United Nations advocates in giving people the tools they need to make informed decisions on HIV while ensuring a fair, equitable and respectful workplace for colleagues living with the virus.

Raising awareness about HIV and how it is transmitted is essential. It helps to reduce stigma and discrimination in our own workplace. It enables us to move closer to realizing our goal of serving as a model of the very working environment the United Nations aims to create through its policies and programmes.

This updated edition of “Living in a world with HIV” will be translated into all six official UN languages and disseminated to all UN personnel throughout the world. Its publication is another positive step in the UN system’s work to fulfill global commitments on AIDS. But success lies with you, the reader. By following the key messages in this booklet, sharing it with your families and communities, and putting its recommendations into practice, you can be a driving force in advancing the cause. This is not only a noble pursuit—it is also one that can change lives.

BAN KI-MOON

United Nations Secretary-General



● INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is powerful. Because it is committed to a fair, equitable and respectful workplace, the UN system is committed to ensuring that all personnel are fully informed about issues that can affect the workplace, including HIV. We have a right to access and understand UN system policies on HIV.

UN Cares is the UN system-wide workplace programme on HIV that provides UN personnel and their families with access to information, learning opportunities, preventive commodities, post-exposure prophylaxis (treatment taken immediately after exposure to HIV in an effort to prevent infection) and a supportive and respectful work environment as established by the *UN Cares 10 Minimum Standards*.¹ The UN Cares web site and the UN Cares Services Directory on HIV (both found at www.uncares.org) provide more information. The *Minimum Standards*, the *UN HIV/AIDS Personnel Policy* and the *ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work*² provide the framework for UN workplace programmes. The *ILO Code of Practice* is the internationally recognized benchmark for HIV-related workplace policies.

Many questions about HIV, UN Cares and UN system policies will be answered during the mandatory learning sessions on HIV. If you have not attended a learning session (or would like to do so again) or are in a remote area, contact the UN Cares/Learning Strategy Facilitators (www.uncares.org/facilitators) at your duty station.

We have learned a great deal about HIV since the UN system began responding to the epidemic in 1987. At that time, many important questions remained unanswered. What were the best means of preventing HIV infection? Could AIDS ever be cured? How might HIV best be handled in the workplace? Today, we have answers to many of these and other key questions.

HIV is an ever-changing epidemic that affects people worldwide. However, it is possible to avoid exposure to HIV by being aware of the latest information and taking the necessary precautions. This booklet provides vital information on HIV that is designed to help you and your family:

- **BE AWARE** of the essential facts about HIV and AIDS
- **PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS** from HIV infection
- **LIVE** positively in response to HIV
- **CONTRIBUTE TO A UN THAT CARES** by committing to a fair, equitable and respectful workplace.

1 The Summary of the UN Cares 10 Minimum Standards is Annex 1 of this booklet.

2 The United Nations HIV/AIDS Personnel Policy is Annex 2 of this booklet and a summary of the 10 key principles of the ILO Code is Annex 3.