



**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY:
A DAY OF MOURNING AND REFLECTION FOR WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV
~Approximately 2400 Women Will Die From HIV-Related Illnesses Today~**

For immediate release: On International Women's Day, the International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW) joins other women living with HIV, AIDS advocates, activists, organizations working with women living with HIV and researchers to call on world leaders to provide resources to stop HIV infection of women. Worldwide, women constitute over half of people living with HIV/AIDS. Women represent 59% and 53% of people with HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, respectively. The Caribbean, Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia experienced increasing rates of HIV in women throughout the years, especially among women who use drugs, sex workers and youth. In 2009, AIDS was the leading cause of death for women in their reproductive years globally.

"The rate of HIV infection in women is propagated by gender inequality, violence against women, poverty and racism. This is unacceptable," said Beri Hull, Global Advocacy Officer for ICW, one of the many groups of women highlighting the crisis facing women in light of the global funding catastrophe. HIV is linked to maternal mortality in 20% of these deaths and high infant mortality. "Many women living with HIV are single mothers with children infected and affected by HIV and they have no source of income to buy medicine, improve nutrition and get medical tests," said Sita Shahi from Nepal.

One immediate solution is reinstatement of funding for the Global Fund to Fight HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which funds 48% of the people on HIV treatment to get medications and which has suffered a funding freeze for new grant opportunities due to budget retrenchment by the G-8 and other European donors. For more information, see the poster entitled "[Surviving the Global Fund Crisis: What Next for Women?](#)"

Without Global Fund increases, "not one new baby will be saved, no new HIV infection will be averted and no new child will be prevented from becoming an orphan through access to treatment," said Morolake Odetoyinbo from Nigeria. "Without funding, those who are on treatment or newly diagnosed will soon have no access to their life-saving medication whatsoever, whilst any prevention methods and programmes will be simply unaffordable. This situation will be disastrous," said Anca Nitulescu of Romania.

Resources must be increased to provide treatments, care and support to all people living with HIV; interventions to address violence; strengthening of maternal and child health services so that all pregnant women living with HIV can access comprehensive services to prevent maternal and child mortality, infant infections and poor maternal health. Women must have access to education and training, employment opportunities, affordable housing as these social determinants are inextricably linked to women's health. "We need support in training and employment," said a representative of the women living with HIV group in Tajikistan.

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