



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

United Nations Development Programme

HIV, Health and Development

# Connecting the Dots

## Strategy Note

HIV, Health and Development 2016 – 2021



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HIV, Health and Development 2016 – 2021

Refreshed in 2019



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Photo: Sia Kambou/UNDP Sierra Leone

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## Introduction

*“The 2030 Agenda demands new partnerships and integrated responses to protect the health of the planet and its people”*

Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator

*“Health is a precondition for and an outcome and indicator of all dimensions of sustainable development”*

United Nations 2012. A/RES/66/288. The Future We Want.

### **The purpose of this strategy is to:**

- Describe the HIV and health work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the period 2016–2021 in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;<sup>1</sup>
- Highlight UNDP’s comparative advantages and key partnerships in HIV and health; and
- Describe the mechanisms that UNDP uses to report on its results in HIV and health and how UNDP’s global HIV and health team is organized.

UNDP’s work in HIV and health is guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UNDP Strategic Plan 2018–2021<sup>2</sup> and related Regional Programmes. The work is also informed by and consistent with key partner strategies, including the Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS) Strategy 2016–2021,<sup>3</sup> the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (Global Fund) Strategy 2017–2021,<sup>4</sup> the World Health Organization (WHO) Thirteenth General Programme of Work 2019–2023,<sup>5</sup> the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (2005),<sup>6</sup> the Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) 2013–2020,<sup>7</sup> the Every Woman, Every Child initiative of the United Nations and the 2019 Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All.<sup>8</sup>

UNDP’s commitment to address major HIV and health challenges is based on the principles that health is both a driver and outcome of sustainable development and that actions across a wide range of development sectors have significant impact on health outcomes.<sup>9</sup> As a development agency, UNDP focuses on addressing social, structural, economic, commercial and environmental determinants of health, which are primarily responsible for health inequalities. In so doing, the organization leverages its extensive presence and networks at global, regional and country levels, its mandate to work broadly – to connect the dots – across development sectors, and its commitment to integrated and innovative solutions to the most pressing development challenges.

As part of the UNDP’s Global Policy Network (GPN), work on HIV and health is undertaken by an integrated team operating across global, regional, country and local levels. Its work falls within three broad action areas:

- Reducing inequalities and social exclusion that affect health and drive epidemics;
- Promoting effective and inclusive governance for health; and
- Building resilient and sustainable systems for health.

UNDP works in HIV and health with a broad range of partners across development sectors at global, regional, national and local levels, including governments, civil society organizations, UN agencies and other intergovernmental organizations, multilateral and bilateral donors, development banks, academia, the private sector and other development partners. This strategy highlights UNDP’s major health-related partnerships, including those with the Global Fund, the Government of Japan, UNAIDS and WHO.

The target audience for this strategy includes UNDP staff at global, regional and country levels, other UN agencies, multilateral and bilateral donors, governments, civil society organizations and other partners working at the intersection of health and sustainable development.



## A refreshed UNDP HIV and health strategy 2016–2021: Boosting delivery, innovation and partnership to accelerate progress across the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The original UNDP 2016-2021 HIV and health strategy, *Connecting the Dots*, was published in 2016. In late 2019, one-third of the way along the timeline of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the strategy was refreshed to reflect recent trends in global health and development as well as evolution within UNDP and among partner organizations.

By 2019, encouraging progress has been made towards some SDG targets on health, such as reducing maternal and child mortality and meeting the need for family planning. Life expectancy continues to grow in many countries.<sup>10</sup> There has been progress in the fight against HIV: the number of deaths has been cut in half since 2005 and coverage of people on life-saving HIV treatment has nearly tripled over the past eight years.<sup>11</sup> Global malaria death rates have dropped by 60 percent since 2000, with more countries being declared malaria-free each year.<sup>12</sup> More than 100 low- and middle-income countries have taken concrete steps toward achieving universal health coverage.<sup>13</sup>

However, these gains vary considerably by SDG indicator and location, and progress on achieving the health-related SDGs overall is insufficient. Ending the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) and combatting viral hepatitis and other communicable diseases will require a sustained effort in the coming decade to build on earlier gains, particularly to address the prevention gap and increase access to prevention and treatment services for key, vulnerable and underserved populations. Achieving universal health coverage by 2030 – which is central to the health-related SDG targets – also remains a major challenge, with current estimates indicating that more than half the world's population still lacks coverage of essential health services.<sup>14</sup> The climate crisis, the health impacts of environmental degradation, the threat of antimicrobial resistance and the burden of NCDs continue to grow, while attention to many determinants of health remains inadequate, highlighting the continuing need in many countries for more sustained and effective multisectoral responses to integrated health and development challenges. The number of displaced people reached a record 70 million in 2018, and nearly two billion people now live in countries affected by crises, conflict or natural disasters, settings that lack sufficiently resilient systems to address high rates of disease and sexual violence.<sup>15</sup> In addition, inequalities – including gender inequality – continue to exacerbate poverty and marginalization.

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