

HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

REVERSING THE EPIDEMIC

FACTS AND POLICY OPTIONS



United Nations Development Programme Bratislava, 2004



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Foreword

This report contains a simple message: without an immediate, accelerated and significantly scaled up response by governments and other actors, HIV/AIDS risks undermining and even reversing human development gains across the countries of Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Mounting such a response will be difficult, but far from impossible. By drawing on experience and knowledge from other parts of the world, and by using new financing mechanisms such as the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria, there is every chance we will succeed in stemming the spread of the epidemic and containing its impact in the region. But that will only happen if the countries of the region first take direct action themselves, focusing their own social and economic policies and resources more clearly and explicitly on this growing problem.

In practice that means several things. It means policy makers must put in place new and extensive networks of information: investing in public awareness by educating the public, especially vulnerable groups. It means that governments need to approach the issue in a way that allows all stakeholders - including people living with HIV/AIDS - to participate in decision-making. And above all it means real leadership in confronting the issue. Leadership at all levels and in all structures of society - not just at the central government level, but also with local authorities, in business organisations, civil societies, schools, religious organisations, and in families.

This report does not simply analyse the problems: it offers concrete solutions. Drawing on best practices and on the proven experience of countries and communities where HIV/AIDS prevention and care have produced results, it sets out a series of recommendations for policy makers, government institutions, business and civil society actors on exactly how that can be done. A product of the joint efforts of a team of researchers drawn from UN agencies, civil society organisations and other partners, it is a powerful call to action.

> Mark Malloch Brown Administrator, UNDP

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