

Women and HIV/AIDS: Confronting the Crisis



A Joint Report by
UNAIDS / UNFPA / UNIFEM

Editorial and production team:

Ann Erb-Leoncavallo - UNFPA
Gillian Holmes - UNAIDS
Gloria Jacobs - Editorial Consultant
Stephanie Urdang - UNIFEM
Joann Vanek - Statistical Consultant
Micol Zarb - UNFPA

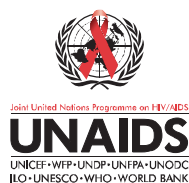
Additional support and research:

Elizabeth Benomar, Nanette Braun, Lynn Collins, Jennifer Cooper, Kathleen Cravero, Nazneen Damji, André DeClercq, Karen Judd, Steven Kraus, Bertil Lindblad, Mary Mahy, Francesca Perucci, William A. Ryan, Joanne Sandler, Karen Stanecki, Akiko Takai, Susan Timberlake, Aminata Toure, Elizabeth Zaniewski, Miriam Zoll

Photo research: Susan Ackerman

Copy editing: Tina Johnson

Design and printing: Prographics, Inc.



UNAIDS is the main advocate for global action on the epidemic. It leads, strengthens and supports an expanded response aimed at preventing HIV transmission, providing care and support, reducing the vulnerability of individuals and communities to HIV, and alleviating the impact of the epidemic.

UNAIDS

20, avenue Appia
CH-1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland
www.unaids.org



UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is the world's largest multilateral source of population assistance. Since it became operational in 1969, it has provided help to developing countries, at their request, to meet reproductive health needs and support development efforts. UNFPA helps women, men and young people plan their families and avoid accidental pregnancies; undergo pregnancy and childbirth safely; avoid sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS; and combat discrimination and violence against women.

UNFPA

220 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017 USA
www.unfpa.org



UNIFEM is the women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies that promote women's human rights, political participation and economic security. UNIFEM works in partnership with UN organizations, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and networks to promote gender equality. It links women's issues and concerns to national, regional and global agendas by fostering collaboration and providing technical expertise on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment strategies.

UNIFEM

304 E. 45th Street, 15th fl.
New York, NY 10017 USA
www.unifem.org

FRONT COVER: An AIDS awareness activist at a World AIDS Day march in Calcutta.

Photo by Deshakalyan Chowdhury—AFP/Getty

BACK COVER: A Brazilian student prepares a poster for World AIDS Day. *Photo by Evaristo Sa—AFP/Getty*

WOMEN AND HIV/AIDS: CONFRONTING THE CRISIS

© 2004 UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM

ISBN: 0-89714-708-1

**Women and
HIV/AIDS:**

**Confronting
the Crisis**

A Joint Report by

UNAIDS / UNFPA / UNIFEM

Acronyms

| | |
|---------|--|
| ART | antiretroviral therapy |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women |
| CEE/CIS | countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States |
| DOTS | directly observed therapy, short-course |
| FGC | female genital cutting |
| HEI | HIV Equity Initiative, Haiti |
| IAVI | International AIDS Vaccine Initiative |
| ICW | International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS |
| IPPF | International Planned Parenthood Federation |
| MaP | Men as Partners, a Southern Africa NGO |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| MSF | Médecins Sans Frontières |
| MTCT | mother-to-child transmission |
| NGO | non-governmental organization |
| PAHO | Pan-American Health Organization |
| PEP | post-exposure prophylaxis |
| PMTCT | preventing mother-to-child transmission |
| SHAZ | Shaping the Health of Adolescents in Zimbabwe |
| STI | sexually transmitted infection |
| UNAIDS | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNGASS | UN General Assembly Special Session (on HIV/AIDS) |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNIFEM | United Nations Development Fund for Women |
| VCT | Voluntary counselling and testing |
| VSO | Voluntary Services Overseas, UK |
| WAR | Women against Rape, Botswana |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| PREFACE | iv |
| CHAPTER 1: CONFRONTING THE CRISIS | 1 |
| CHAPTER 2: PREVENTION | 11 |
| Ensure that adolescent girls and women have the knowledge and means to prevent HIV infection | |
| CHAPTER 3: TREATMENT | 23 |
| Ensure equal and universal access to treatment | |
| CHAPTER 4: CAREGIVING | 31 |
| Recognize and support home-based caregivers of AIDS patients and orphans | |
| CHAPTER 5: EDUCATION | 39 |
| Promote girls' primary and secondary education and women's literacy | |
| CHAPTER 6: VIOLENCE | 45 |
| Promote zero tolerance of all forms of violence against women and girls | |
| CHAPTER 7: WOMEN'S RIGHTS | 51 |
| Promote and protect the human rights of women and girls | |
| CHAPTER 8: CHARTING THE WAY FORWARD | 57 |
| ENDNOTES | 62 |

Preface

HIV/AIDS is no longer striking primarily men. Today, more than 20 years into the epidemic, women account for nearly half the 40 million people living with HIV worldwide. In sub-Saharan Africa, 57 per cent of adults with HIV are women, and young women aged 15 to 24 are more than three times as likely to be infected as young men. Despite this alarming trend, women know less than men about how HIV/AIDS is transmitted and how to prevent infection, and what little they do know is often rendered useless by the discrimination and violence they face.

This report is an urgent call to action to address the triple threat of gender inequality, poverty and HIV/AIDS. By tackling these forces simultaneously, we can reduce the spread of the epidemic and its devastating consequences.

Women must not be regarded as victims. They are, in many places, leading the way forward. In communities scattered around the globe, women and men are taking action to increase knowledge about the disease, expand access to sexual and reproductive health and educational services, increase women's ability to negotiate safer sexual relations, combat gender discrimination and violence and increase access to female-controlled prevention methods such as the female condom.

All of these efforts, outlined in this report, are critical. As long as women and adolescent girls are unable to earn an income and exercise their rights to education, health and property, or are threatened with violence, progress on the AIDS front will pass them by. As the stories in this report attest, there is no limit to innovative practices. Strategies for survival are pioneered every day on the ground by women living with HIV/AIDS. The limitations lie elsewhere: in the painful shortage of resources—especially for women and women's issues—and in the shameful lack of political will to meet international commitments. For too many years, the voices and demands of women, particularly women living with HIV, have fallen on deaf ears. The world can no longer afford to ignore them. We must find the money needed for care and treatment for all. We must put an end to the stigma and discrimination

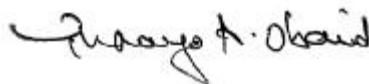
that limit women's access to treatment and leave them responsible for taking care of the ill and dying. We must make it possible for them to envision a future.

This report grows out of our shared belief that the world must respond to the HIV crisis confronting women. It highlights the work of the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS—a UNAIDS initiative that supports and energizes programmes that mitigate the impact of AIDS on girls and women worldwide. Through its advocacy and networking, the Coalition is drawing greater attention to the effects of HIV on women and stimulating concrete, effective action by an ever-increasing range of partners.

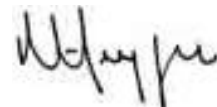
We believe this report, with its straightforward analysis and practical responses, can be a valuable advocacy and policy tool for addressing this complex challenge. The call to empower women has never been more urgent. We must act now to strengthen their capacity, resilience and leadership.



Dr. Peter Piot
Executive Director, UNAIDS

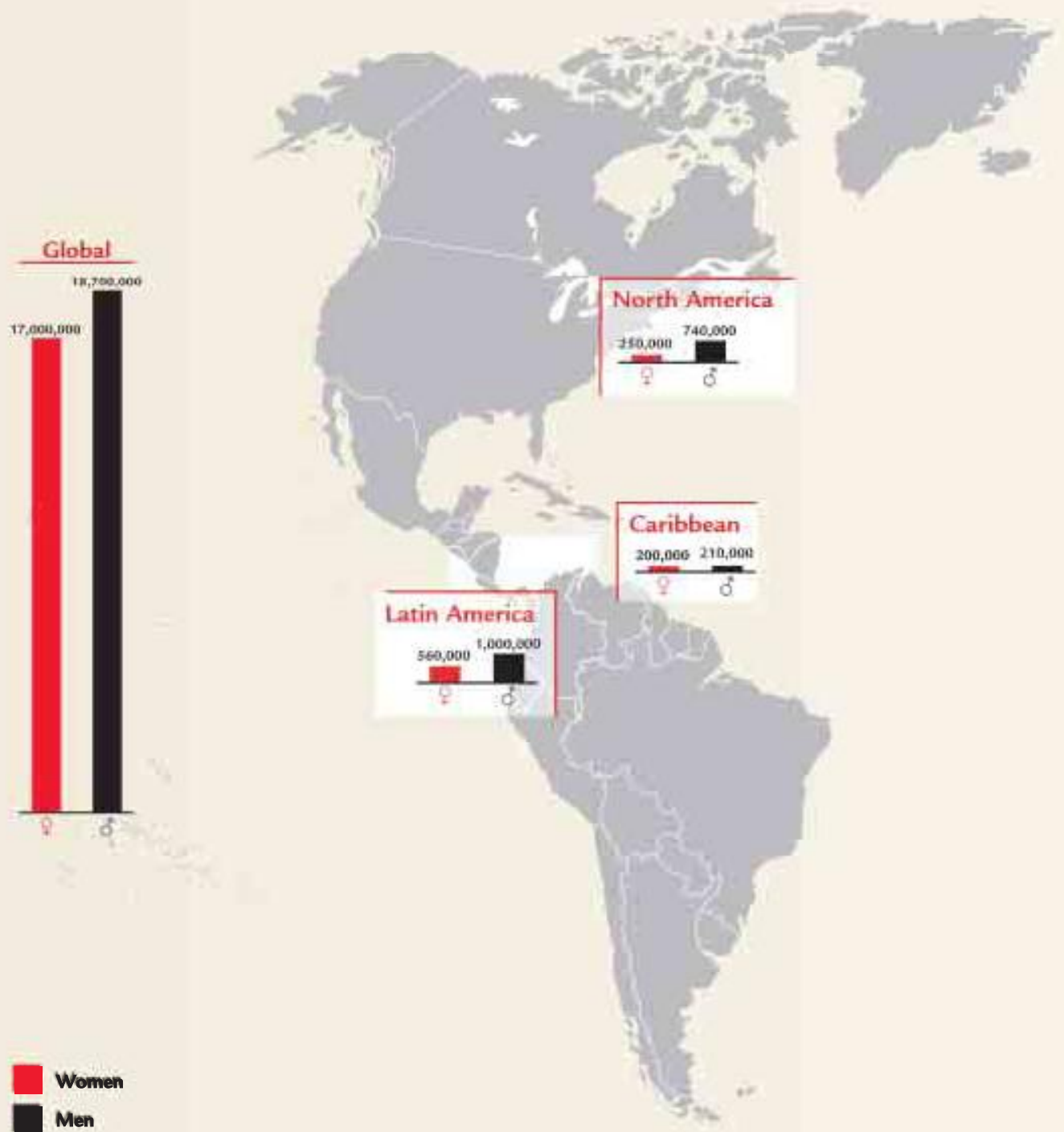


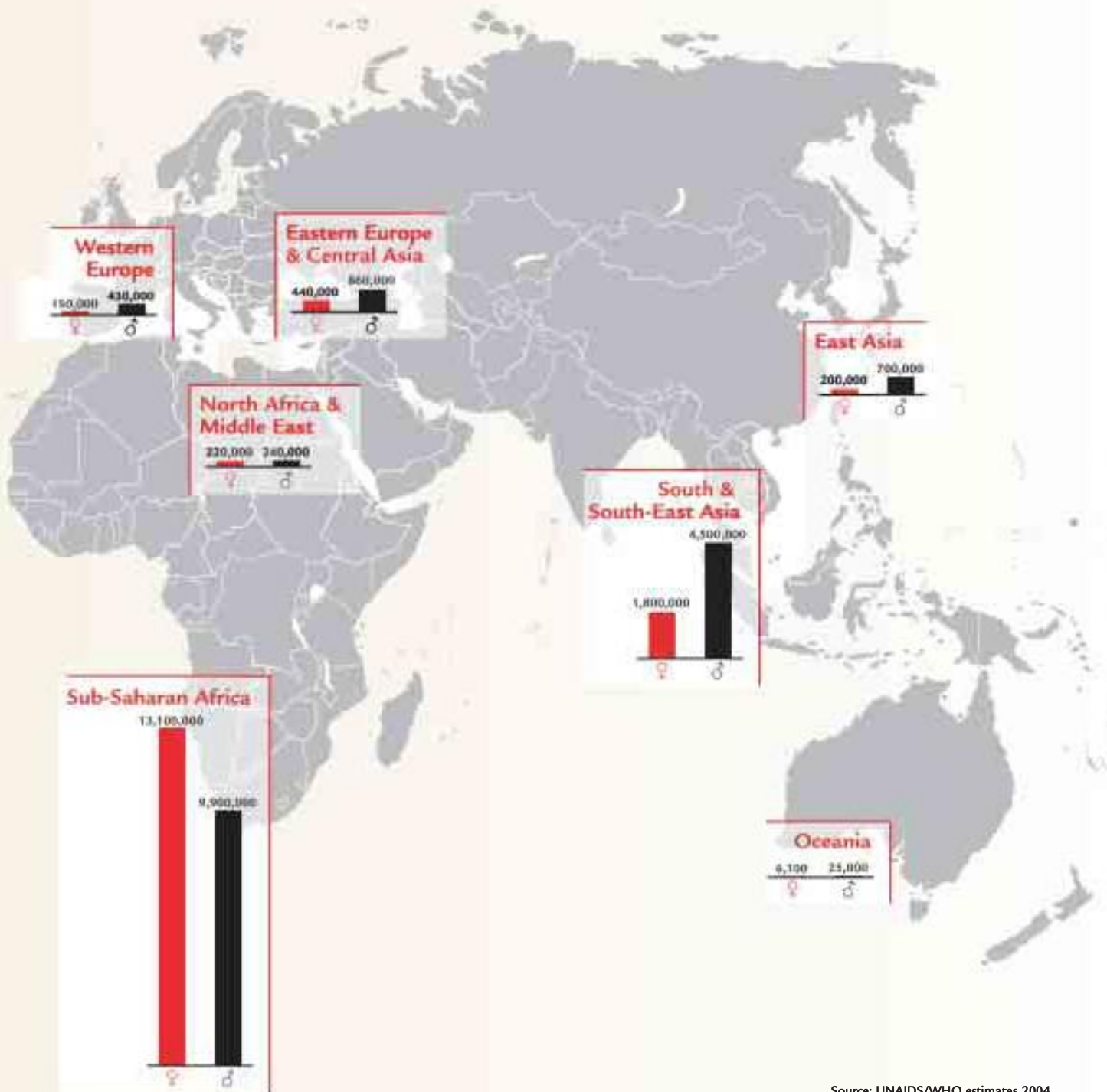
Thoraya A. Obaid
Executive Director, UNFPA



Noeleen Heyzer
Executive Director, UNIFEM

Estimated number of women and men (15-49) living with HIV/AIDS by region for 2003 (as of 21 June 2004)





Source: UNAIDS/WHO estimates 2004