

PRESS RELEASE

Lesotho launches HIV and Health Situation Room to Fast-Track Progress towards ending AIDS and TB through the power of data

Lesotho HIV and Health Situation Room centralizes health data for HIV, TB, and Maternal and Child Health and ensure more effective and precise programming and reach more people with services.

Maseru/LESOTHO, 8 May 2018 - The Right Honourable Prime Minister of Lesotho Dr Thomas Thabane, in partnership with UNAIDS, represented by Mr Michel Sidibe, UNAIDS Executive Director and Under-Secretary General of the United Nations, has launched an innovative new tool to track progress and identify gaps in HIV, TB, and Maternal Health programming in Lesotho.

The HIV and Health Situation Room shows in real-time the service delivery data, producing a comprehensive picture and understanding of Lesotho's epidemic. The Lesotho HIV and Health Situation Room enables quick feedback on results at the county and community levels and identifies any bottlenecks and access issues. It aims to speed up and streamline communications between policy-makers and implementers, to help Lesotho stay on track to reach its national health targets and to improve the lives of people across the country.

Latest data from the Lesotho HIV and Health Situation Room Situation Room shows that Lesotho is close to having 200,000 people on treatment. New HIV infections have fallen by 45% between 2000 and 2017. This has been possible due to Lesotho's adoption of a people-centred approach in its response to ensure that no one is left behind, thus accelerating progress towards ending its AIDS epidemic.

Deaths of people living with HIV were reduced by 66% since the mid-2000s as access to antiretroviral treatment was scaled up. By end 2017, approximately 62% of adults living with HIV in Lesotho had access to lifesaving medicine and >70% of pregnant women living with HIV had access to medicine to prevent transmission of the virus to their child. This resulted in 60% decline in new HIV infections among children since 2000. The scale-up of antiretroviral treatment also reduced incidence of tuberculosis. At present about 72% of people living with HIV also suffer from tuberculosis.

The Lesotho Situation Room will enable programme staff to localize where efforts need to be intensified. This more accurate programming will help to ensure that adults and children living with HIV have regular access to care and treatment and that antiretroviral medicines are replenished quickly should stock-outs occur.

The Government of Lesotho and UNAIDS have worked together to bring two different data sets into one tool: data from the District Health Information System (DHIS2) and Lesotho's HIV Estimates.

The Lesotho HIV and Health Situation Room, developed by the Ministry of Health Lesotho in collaboration with UNAIDS, is supported by the Government of Sweden, which contributed resources as part of its continued support to improving monitoring and evaluation of the global AIDS epidemic.

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