



**VI International Eastern Europe and Central Asia AIDS Conference
April 18-20 2018
Moscow**

Final Statement

VI International Eastern Europe and Central Asia AIDS Conference (EECAAC 2018), organized with the support of the Government of the Russian Federation by the Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Wellbeing (Rospotrebnadzor) and the Joint United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) took place in Moscow on April 18-20, 2018.

More than 3000 delegates from 63 countries have registered to participate in the conference, including high-ranking representatives of public authorities, health professionals and policy-makers, leading scientists, representatives of civil society organizations, religious organizations, the business community, as well as managers and experts from international organizations.

The forum in Moscow remains the key mechanism for strategic dialogue and developing cooperation on issues related to the HIV response in countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) region.

During the panel and parallel sessions, roundtables, special events of the Conference, the participants discussed a wide range of issues, including the progress and obstacles in the implementation of the UN goals to fight HIV/AIDS worldwide and in the EECA region, in particular; the effectiveness of programs for the prevention of HIV infection among various groups of the population; modern trends in the disease epidemiology; new treatment approaches, including the development of new drugs, ensuring commitment and increasing the availability and quality of antiretroviral therapy; research in the field of transmission mechanisms; the emergence and spread of drug-resistant forms of the virus; socio-economic factors and the impact of HIV-infection; the development of inter-State cooperation and program assistance in the area of HIV-response as well as other issues.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic in the region as a whole and in each country of Eastern Europe and Central Asia has its own unique characteristics, which affirms the need to apply a variety of approaches and reinforce measures to stop the spread of HIV by 2030 in pursuit of sustainable development.

Thanks to the attention given to the problem of HIV/AIDS in the EECA region, growing investments in the fight against the epidemic, and the joint efforts of public institutions, civil society, international organizations, religious associations, and the business community, since the Fifth Conference in 2016 r. in the countries of the region progress has been made in several areas, crucial in the fight against HIV/AIDS: New strategic documents and programs have been developed and implemented, including:

"National strategy for combating the spread of HIV infection in the Russian Federation for the period until the year 2020;

"The State target program on HIV/AIDS prevention in Armenia for the 2017-2021 period";

"The national program on HIV in the Republic of Tajikistan for the 2017-2020 period";

"The State program on overcoming the HIV infection in the Kyrgyz Republic for the 2017-2021 period";

HIV/AIDS response is included in the "development strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2050" and the "State program for the development of health of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the 2016-2019 period."

✓ The amount of domestic investments to fight the HIV epidemic has increased in Belarus, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan. In two countries of the region – Russia and Kazakhstan – financing activities on the diagnosis and treatment of HIV are carried out entirely at the expense of national resources.

✓ Greater portions of the population are now covered with HIV testing in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Uzbekistan.

✓ The cost of annual courses of treatment has decreased in a number of countries (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia), in part thanks to the innovative approaches to organizing cooperation with manufacturers and ARV suppliers.

✓ Therapy has become more accessible: more than 60% of all HIV-positive people are aware of their condition and are receiving treatment in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan.

✓ Women's access to HIV services is being expanded to prevent the vertical transmission from mother to child, and the number of cases of neonatal infection is decreasing significantly. Two countries in the region have received certificates about the elimination of HIV transmission from mother to child.

Among other achievements, it is worth noting the improvement of normative and legal framework aimed at scaling up HIV prevention, notably with the participation of socially-oriented civil society organizations, as well as the fight against stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV and their families. The Conference reaffirmed the governments' commitment to ending AIDS epidemic by 2030, reaching the 90-90-90¹ goal, and making the necessary efforts to achieve the following ambitious global targets by 2020: fewer than 500,000 new cases of HIV infection, fewer than 500,000 deaths due to AIDS, elimination of HIV-related discrimination.

In order to achieve these objectives, the EECA region needs to devote particular attention to the following tasks in the near future:

¹ Reaching 90-90-90 goal by 2020 means that 90% of people living with HIV need to know their HIV status, 90% of people diagnosed with HIV will be receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART), and 90% of them should have an undetectable viral load.

- further promote the development of scientific research in the field of epidemiology, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of HIV and related diseases, including research and development of new diagnostic and therapeutic drugs; ensure that the research results are implemented into working practice for more effective HIV response;
- ensure the implementation of comprehensive prevention strategies based on evidence and innovative methods to prevent HIV;
- implement comprehensive prevention strategies for key populations, relevant national legislation in the countries of the region, and scientifically-based innovative HIV-prevention methods;
- increase the number of information and training programs to provide young people with the knowledge, abilities, and skills needed to protect themselves from HIV infection, with a particular emphasis on the Internet and social media, including the support of youth initiatives aimed at HIV response on the "peer-to-peer" basis;
- facilitate the access of migrant workers to programs for preventing, diagnosing, and treating the HIV infection and related diseases through the development of inter-state partnerships and the improvement of legal mechanisms in all countries of the region;
- implement corporate programs to inform employees about modern methods of preventing HIV infection;
- expand testing of vulnerable groups, including the use of the latest technologies and express testing techniques;
- provide pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for key populations;
- develop integrated approaches to educate society on the problems of drug addiction with a focus on preventing HIV infection from intravenous injections, and effective methods of treatment, rehabilitation, and socialization of injecting drug users;
- help increase the accessibility of means for preventing HIV and STIs, including condoms;
- improve the coverage of antiretroviral treatment for all who need treatment and support, including people in prisons, with simultaneous optimization of treatment standards, like combined forms of drugs;
- improve access to high-quality specialized care and medico-social services to children and adolescents living with HIV and their parents;
- build on existing mechanisms for implementing programs for women and girls affected by HIV, strengthen their leadership potential through empowerment;
- strengthen efforts to combat the spread of inaccurate information about HIV as well as the refusal of some parents or guardians to provide treatment to HIV-positive minors;
- provide an atmosphere of intolerance towards manifestations of stigmatization and discrimination against people living with HIV;
- contribute to reducing the prices of antiretroviral drugs by stimulating competition between manufacturers, through negotiations with the owners

- of patents on granting voluntary licenses, as well as considering the possibility of issuing compulsory licenses on clinically important drugs;
- develop supranational cooperation involving representatives of the pharmaceutical industry and civil society to overcome the barriers to providing access to HIV treatment – registration barriers, barriers in the sphere of intellectual property and a non-competitive environment;
 - actively engage socially-oriented civil society organizations and organizations of people living with HIV in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions to combat HIV/AIDS epidemic;
 - strengthen the capacity of communities susceptible to HIV infection through training events, provide expertise and continuity of programs by building partnerships of non-profit organizations;
 - support and facilitate the involvement of religious communities in HIV response activities;

Participants of the Conference reaffirmed their willingness to adhere to the following principles in their efforts to counter the epidemic in Eastern Europe and Central Asia:

- fulfill the obligations of the "Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: On the Fast-Track to Accelerate the Fight against HIV and to End the AIDS Epidemic by 2030" adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2016;
- provide equal, sustainable, universal access to prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS;
- observe the right to health as a fundamental human right;
- adapt internationally scientifically-based approaches to HIV response to the needs of the countries in the region, taking into account their epidemiological, economic, social, and cultural characteristics;
- commit to regional cooperation in the fight against HIV epidemic and to support collaborative programs to promote international development in this area at the regional level;
- partner and support socially-oriented non-profit organizations working in the field of HIV prevention and the provision of care to people living with HIV;
- develop public-private partnerships and support social business initiatives in the sphere of response to HIV and related diseases.

Participants urge people to consider the results of the work of the VI International Eastern Europe and Central Asia AIDS Conference at the next meetings of the National Committees on HIV/AIDS.

EECAAC 2018 delegates state that they will continue to strengthen national and regional capacities with a view to ending the HIV epidemic in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and support the proposal to host the VII Conference in Moscow in 2020.