PRESS RELEASE

Zimbabweans on antiretroviral treatment must continue with prescribed medication

31 October 2018, Harare - In response to recent media reports alleging the discovery of a cure for HIV and AIDS, Dr. Alex Gasasira WHO Representative to Zimbabwe said, “there is no cure for HIV infection. However, effective antiretroviral (ARV) drugs can control the virus and help prevent transmission so that people with HIV, and those at substantial risk, can enjoy healthy, long and productive lives.”

The United Nations wish to reaffirm that to date, there is no known and proven cure for HIV infection, but effective treatment exists to manage the infection through antiretroviral therapy and drugs.

Zimbabwe has very well-established procedures for clinical trials. Clinical trials are the process by which any new medical approaches including drugs are rigorously evaluated to determine whether they are safe and effective in the prevention and/or treatment of any ailments.

The United Nations in Zimbabwe wishes to remind and encourage any researchers involved in developing possible new treatments for any ailments, including HIV and AIDS to subject these to the Ministry of Health and Child Care (MOHCC) national clinical trial processes and procedures.

The United Nations wishes to reiterate guidance provided by MOHCC to all clients on antiretroviral treatment for HIV and AIDS to continue their prescribed medication.

The use of antiretroviral treatment, in line with national guidelines, has resulted in better health outcomes for people living with HIV. Any decision to stop or switch medication should be taken with the full guidance of licensed medical practitioners. The United Nations wishes to also remind the public to continue to limit exposure to risk factors for HIV infection.

National efforts supported by UN; Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria and TB; and the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and others have sustained antiretroviral treatment to over one million people living with the HIV in Zimbabwe. This has led to the reduction of AIDS related deaths by 63% from 2010 to 2017 and overall better health outcomes.

The United Nations is supporting Zimbabwe to achieve the commitment to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. Zimbabwe is well on track to achieve this as measured by the 2020 targets of 90-90-90 for treatment. By December 2017: 87% of people living with HIV knew their status; 74% of them were on treatment with 87% viral suppression among those on treatment.

The United Nations wishes to reaffirm full commitment to supporting Zimbabwe’s commendable efforts to achieve national, regional and global HIV and AIDS control targets including the implementation of the fast track strategy to end the epidemic in line with 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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