

HIV/AIDS Experience in Cuba



As the number of deaths caused by the HIV virus has diminished by 42% in the World and new infections dropped by 35%, some people may think that the danger has gone. However, the alert still is on in several nations, including Cuba.

This Caribbean nation does not lower its guard even though there have been huge advances in the struggle against the virus and the Island is considered as a model in the struggle against the disease, as declared by doctor Michel Sibidé, Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Program against HIV-Aids.

In a recent visit to Cuba, Doctor Sibidé, who is also Assistant United Nations Secretary General, warned that the epidemic has not yet been wiped out, even though the world has been able to overcome the horror and fear inspired by the disease some years back.

During his visit to Cuba, Dr. Sibidé reviewed some of the achievements of Cuban researchers in the struggle to stop the disease from spreading and to advance even further: to guarantee the treatment of patients with the latest techniques available.

Cuba is the first nation to demonstrate the real possibility of eliminating the mother to child transmission of the HIV, as certified on June 30th. last by the Pan American and World Health Organizations.

According to doctor Sidibé, in Cuba both the political leadership and the pledge to face head on the challenges posed by HIV-Aids, are transformed into people-centered methods, focused on community

prioritized prevention and treatment.

The Cuban Ministry of Public Health is applying a strategy that calls for the re-entry into society of HIV-patients, some of whom are employed as public educators as to the threats of the disease and the proper ways to avoid it.

Other important advances achieved by Cuba include the fact that 93% of the HIV infected persons know of their condition, 85% of them are under antiretroviral treatment, and 47% of them have reduced the viral count in their bodies to levels that are undetectable in a lab test.

To compare Cuba to other countries in our Hemisphere, excluding the United States and Canada, 70% of HIV positive patients know of their condition, 52% are taking antiretroviral drugs, and only 34% have an undetectable viral count.

The Cuban health authorities accept the numerous recognitions to their good results in facing HIV-Aids and consider them as an incentive to redouble the prevention campaigns and insist in the treatment of those identified patients.

Still, it is necessary to emphasize on social conditions, get closer to the risk groups, give a better use to available resources and avoid discrimination.

The Cubans are accepting the difficult challenges posed by the UN institutions and are working to fulfill the goal of eradication HIV/AIDS before 2030.

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