

SCALING UP SOLUTIONS:

Addressing the complexity of HIV in the Western Pacific Region

UNAIDS and WHO Side Event

76th WHO Regional Committee Meeting | 22 October 2025, Nadi, Fiji

Background

HIV remains a priority public health challenge in the Western Pacific (38 countries and areas). The region faces a prevention crisis with overall new infections reduced by just 11% since 2010. Country and regional health security are further compromised by sharp increases in Fiji, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea.

These epidemics differ by context yet share common determinants: transmission among key populations (including people who inject drugs and through sexual exposure), gaps in prevention, late diagnosis, low treatment coverage, stigma and discrimination and limited community engagement.

The overlap of HIV and substance use requires urgent action. Injecting drug use and growing amphetamine-type stimulant (ATS) use heighten risk. At the same time, scarce harm-reduction services and punitive drug laws blunt effective responses.

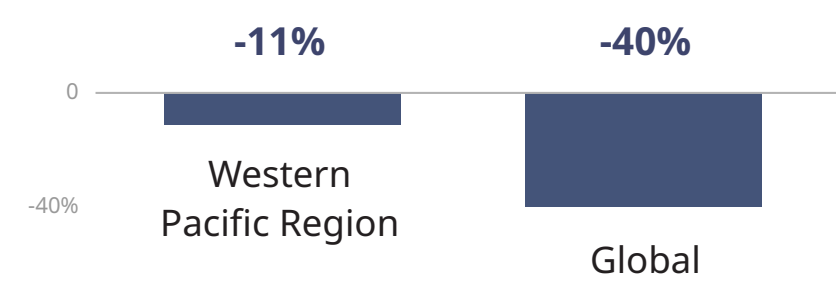
This side event focuses on HIV and substance use but also addresses the wider context of the epidemic and response. The session brings together governments, civil society and partners to share progress, exchange lessons, and renew commitments to an inclusive, sustained response.

The dream of ending AIDS by 2030 will be lost without sustained commitment to:

- adopt holistic evidence-based policies that effectively prevent transmission
- improve treatment outcomes
- protect public health resources

Regional Context

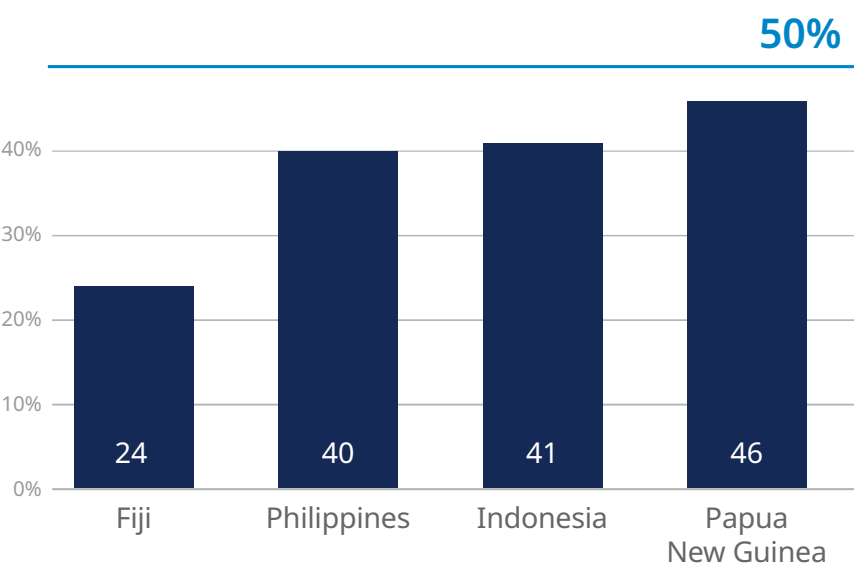
Reduction of new infections 2010 – 2024:



Several countries have shown strong declines through:



Antiretroviral treatment coverage below 50% in 2024



"HIV is not 'over', as the situation across the Western Pacific Region clearly shows. We need strategic and targeted approaches to prevention, testing and treatment tailored to specific outbreaks and affected populations. More than 40 years into the global HIV response, now is the time to act, urgently and together."

Dr. Saia Ma'u Piukala, Regional Director,
WHO Western Pacific Regional Office



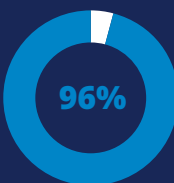
"The investments we make in HIV services for the most marginalized populations ultimately also ensure the health of the wider community. What we need now is political will and shared responsibility to target investments to the right interventions for the right people in the right locations. Conversations are also needed about the right of all people to health, dignity and a life free from stigma and discrimination."

Eamonn Murphy, Regional Director
UNAIDS Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe and Central Asia



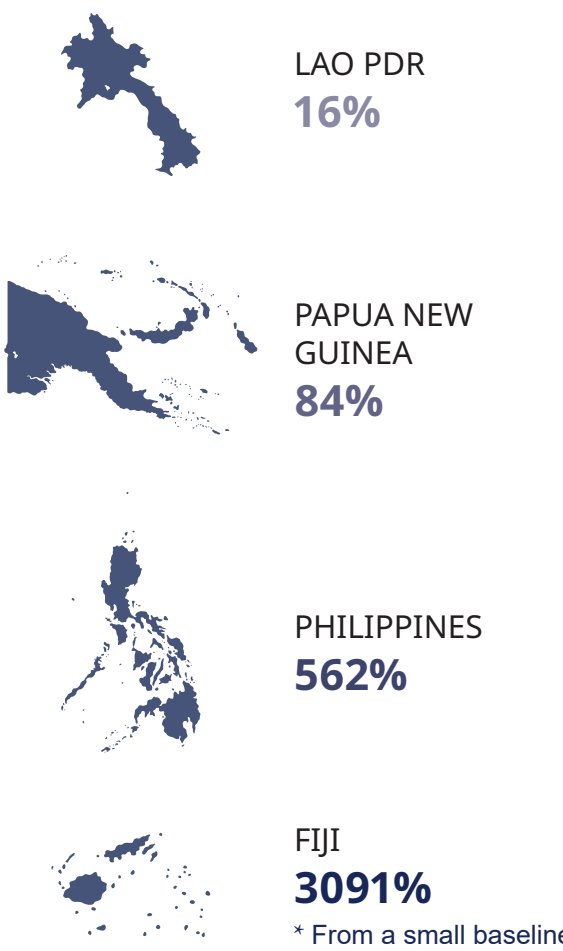
Viet Nam example

Viet Nam's scale-up of needle and syringe programmes (NSP) and opioid agonist therapy (OAT) reached over **45,000 people who inject drugs by 2024.**



In 2023, 96% of people who inject drugs used safe injecting practices.

RISING NEW INFECTIONS 2010 - 2024



Crisis epidemics and responses

Philippines

- EPIDEMIC:**
- Long among the fastest-growing HIV epidemics in the Western Pacific Region, with a six-fold increase in new infections since 2010
- FACTORS:**
- Concentrated primarily among young men who have sex with men (MSM)
 - Increasing risks linked to chemsex practices
 - Delayed diagnosis and low ART coverage
- RESPONSE:**
- Government is scaling up service coverage including HIV screening and diagnostics, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and ART
 - Promoting integration with universal health coverage reforms

Papua New Guinea (PNG)

- EPIDEMIC:**
- New HIV infections have risen by 84% since 2010. Alongside the concentrated key population epidemic, infections are rising among women of reproductive age and children
- FACTORS:**
- Limited antenatal care coverage and gaps in HIV screening during pregnancy increase the risk of mother-to-child transmission (MTCT)
 - Gender-based violence
- RESPONSE:**
- Government declared HIV a national crisis in June 2025
 - Integrating HIV services with primary health care
 - Improving HIV screening in antenatal care
 - Decentralising access to ART

Fiji

- EPIDEMIC:**
- Sharp rise in new infections. 10-fold increase since 2014 with potential spillover to other Pacific Island countries
- FACTORS:**
- Injecting drug use and sexual transmission among other key populations (men who have sex with men, sex workers, transgender people)
 - Suboptimal prevention services
 - Delayed diagnosis, late treatment initiation and low ART coverage
 - Widespread stigma
- RESPONSE:**
- Government declared an HIV outbreak in January 2025
 - Expanding HIV testing, ART and surveillance
 - Supporting harm reduction, integration into primary health care (PHC), and strengthening community outreach
 - Australia and New Zealand have contributed significant resources to the government-led and WHO-supported response

What works



Prevention at scale — Condoms, PrEP, harm reduction, community- and key population-led services



Integrate HIV with PHC/UHC (Universal Health Coverage) — one platform, many gains (HIV, NCDs, maternal health, hepatitis)



Early diagnosis — Self-testing, community testing, point-of-care



Legal reform — Harm reduction and key-population access



Treat & retain — Differentiated ART delivery; undetectable equals untransmittable (U=U)



Finance for impact — protect and grow domestic funds to ensure sustainability



End stigma — Rights-affirming, youth-friendly, safe services and societies



Community-led delivery — fund what communities do best—reach, trust, retain

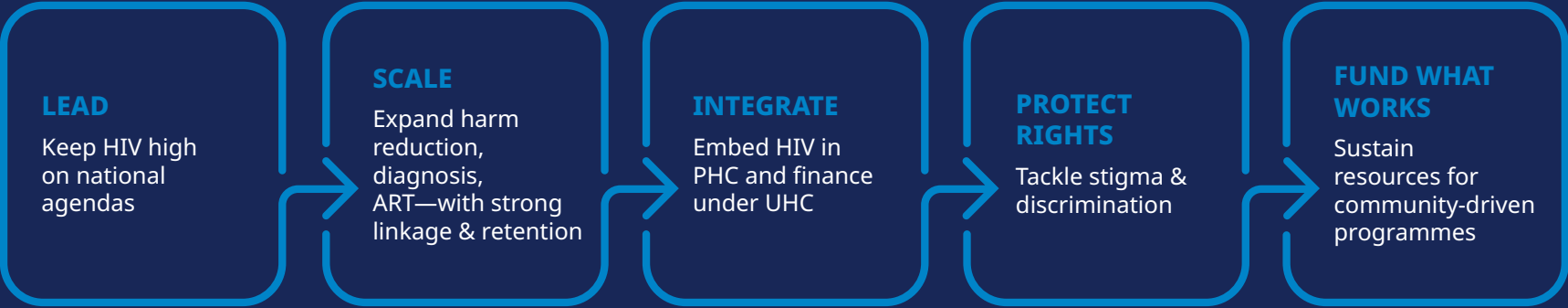
Role of the United Nations

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations and works closely with global and national partners towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. As part of the Joint Programme, WHO provides technical guidance and health systems support.

UNAIDS and WHO work together with partners to:

- Advocate for evidence- and rights-based interventions
- Support integration of HIV and substance use services within PHC
- Champion community-led responses
- Appeal for sustained financing amidst dwindling attention and resources

Call to Action



E dua ga na kau e sega ni veikau — *One tree does not make a forest.*

Let's complete the task of ending AIDS together.