

CHILDREN AND AIDS: A STOCKTAKING FACT SHEET #1

PREVENTING MOTHER TO CHILD TRANSMISSION (PMTCT):

Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS target: By 2010, offer appropriate services to 80 per cent of women in need.

One out of 10 pregnant women living in the capital cities of sub-Saharan Africa is infected with HIV and about one in three children born to HIV-positive mothers will contract the virus. The highest known infection rates among pregnant women are in:

- Gaborone (Botswana) and Mbabane (Swaziland), where one in three is infected;
- Maseru (Lesotho) and Pretoria (South Africa), where one in four is infected;

Only nine per cent of HIV-positive pregnant women in low- and middle-income countries received ARV prophylaxis for PMTCT in 2005 – an increase from three per cent in 2003.

Only seven countries (for which data is available) provided ARV prophylaxis to more than 40 per cent of HIV-infected pregnant women in 2005, putting them on course to meet the *Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS* target in this area: Argentina, Brazil, Botswana, Jamaica, Russian Federation, Thailand and Ukraine.

In some high-prevalence countries, trends in ARV access for pregnant women are showing remarkably positive results. For example:

- In Namibia, access rates jumped from six to 29 per cent from 2004 to 2005;
- In that same year, access rates to ARVs for pregnant women in Swaziland rose to 34 per cent from a mere four per cent;
- During that same time period, access rates in South Africa and Rwanda rose from 22 to 30 per cent and 21 to 36 per cent, respectively.

The factors contributing to recent increases in ARV access rates for pregnant women include:

- Efforts to adopt a decentralized approach for providing service and training;
- Demonstrated political commitment. For example, more than 100 countries surveyed have established national PMTCT programmes;
- Incorporating whole family care with models such as MTCT Plus – a package of HIV prevention, care, support and treatment for mothers, children and their families.