

PRESS RELEASE

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AFRICA REFRAMES HIV RESPONSE AS ECONOMIC INVESTMENT AMID SHRINKING DONOR FUNDING

Tangiers, Morocco — The Africa-led HIV Control Working Group (HCWG), hosted by the Centre for Infectious Disease Research in Zambia (CIDRZ), convened a high-level dialogue in Tangiers, Morocco, on the margins of the 58th United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Conference of Ministers. The meeting brought together senior officials from ministries of health and finance from Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, among others, alongside global and regional partners, to explore sustainable financing solutions for HIV and broader health systems in Africa.

The dialogue comes at a critical moment, as countries navigate a “triple transition” of declining external HIV funding, a shifting epidemic increasingly linked to chronic disease, and persistent macro-fiscal pressures. Participants agreed that this moment demands a **fundamental shift in how health is financed and prioritised**.

A key theme was the need to reposition health spending, particularly for HIV prevention, and system resilience, as a strategic economic investment. Evidence presented showed that sustained investment in health not only saves lives but also protects economic growth, reduces future public expenditure, and strengthens fiscal stability.

Key Takeaways

- **Domestic financing is no longer optional:** Countries must increase domestic resource mobilisation to sustain HIV and health programmes.
- **Health investment drives economic stability:** Funding health systems yields long-term economic returns and prevents costly crises.
- **Integrated planning is essential:** Stronger alignment between health and finance sectors improves efficiency and sustainability.
- **Innovative financing must be scaled:** Blended finance, insurance models, and regional approaches can unlock new resources while protecting equity.

Participants also highlighted practical examples, including the use of investment cases to demonstrate economic returns, strengthened collaboration between ministries of health and finance, and the growing role of private-sector solutions such as insurance and blended finance.

The meeting concluded with a strong call to action for increased investment in African-led platforms like HCWG that prioritise local leadership, including women's leadership, and institutionalise collaboration between health and finance sectors.

Delegates stressed that sustainable progress will depend not only on financing tools, but also on governance, political commitment, and a shift in narrative toward long-term, system-based investments.

By advancing African-owned solutions and aligning health with economic priorities, stakeholders affirmed their commitment to building resilient health systems that protect both lives and livelihoods across the continent.

About the HCWG

The African-led HIV Control Working Group, funded by the Gates Foundation, comprises African experts with relevant experience from diverse sectors, predominantly based within the African region, to work collaboratively to develop:

(i) A framework that identifies the necessary components for long-term sustained HIV control with particular reference to the African context.

(ii) A forward-looking research and program implementation agenda that informs country progress and achievements and identifies knowledge gaps that impede the provision of clear guidance to countries about how best to target their systems-building investments.

<https://hivcwg.org/>

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