

HIV infections decline over last decade

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"Thanks to key interventions such [as] behaviour change communications, condoms, prevention of mother-to-child transmission, widespread circumcision campaigns and other preventive measures, new HIV infections have declined steadily over the last decade," Labour Minister Mildred Oliphant said.

Minister Oliphant launched the ILO study on Friday, 24 April 2015.

"This is also confirmed by the studies elsewhere in the world, which indicated that in 2013, the world registered 2.3 million new HIV infections, a 33% decline from 2001 levels," she said.

Minister Oliphant said the Global Fund points out that the decline in the number of new HIV infections is not only the result of increased prevention, it also correlates with an increase in the number of people accessing HIV treatment.

"It also points out that putting an HIV-positive person on treatment reduces their chances of transmitting the virus by as much as 90%," she said.

Minister Oliphant said the study in its analysis concluded inter alia that:

- Increasing knowledge on HIV and AIDS is not just a good outcome, but it is critical to the achievement of other good

outcomes.

- Voluntary Counselling and Testing is a proven strategy that empowers people to take the steps needed to know their HIV status and, if necessary, seek treatment.
- Changing or reducing risky behaviours is another good outcome that is critically important to slowing the advance of HIV and AIDS.
- Reducing stigma and discrimination is an important outcome in that it has an impact on the successful achievement of the other good outcomes.
- The life-saving potential of ART is well known and has significantly improved the global HIV and AIDS landscape, especially in terms of enabling employed People Living with HIV and their partners, families and communities to enjoy longer and healthier lives.
- Management and Worker leaders are key in creating a conducive environment for these things to happen.

The total number of people living with HIV in South Africa was estimated at approximately 5.51 million in 2014, which is an increase from 4.09 million in 2002.

"This is a huge number and worrying by any standards and it could easily be equivalent to a total population of some countries in our continent," Minister Oliphant said.

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