

Putting the **WORLD** in Local World AIDS Day Commemorations

On December 1 every year, many communities across the world hold ceremonies to commemorate the dead, celebrate the living, and renew a pledge to fight against the AIDS epidemic.

In the United States and other wealthier nations, access to anti-HIV therapies and medicine to treat AIDS-related infections, many people are living much longer and healthier lives.

In many countries, the astronomical prices charged for medicine and the crushing debt payments imposed by the IMF and World Bank effectively deny access to drugs for 95% of the globe's people with HIV. In a number of African nations, 25% of the population has HIV and rates new infections are growing rapidly.

With no access to care and treatment, AIDS will erase many countries.

As the largest shareholder in most international institutions the United States Government leads and directs everything from the World Health Organization to the World Bank.

The US Government claims that it is accountable to its citizens. US residents have a right to insist that their government take the steps needed to save millions of lives.

It is a democratic right to demand that the United States value millions of lives more than drug company profit margins.

**There is a simple equation to staunch the death and dying.
The United States must use its clout and power to:**

- **Force the IMF and World Bank to use their own financial resources to cancel the debts of the world's poorest countries.** Debt cancellation must no longer be linked to structural adjustment policies.
- **Force the World Health Organization to create a global program for public and private sector generic drug manufacturers that generates the massive economies of scale in manufacturing and raw materials, country level drug registry, and create a global generic distribution system.**

*A global program of generic drug manufacture and distribution can put sophisticated AIDS treatment into the hands of people with AIDS in poor countries at prices 99-99.9% lower than the prices charged in wealthy countries. **Debt cancellation**, coupled with assistance from donor nations and foundations, will enable impoverished nations to pay for medicines needed to treat millions with no access.*

This information packet and tool kit, produced on behalf of the Health GAP Coalition, is intended to assist advocates who wish to address the global AIDS crisis during local World AIDS Day commemorations.

Contents:

- Health GAP Contact info
- Global Treatment Access Issues update
- Action page: get involved
- Grassroots Media Guide: ACT UP Philadelphia's guide on media work
- Sample poster artwork + how-to

The Health GAP Coalition is a U.S. based group of organizations and individuals dedicated to increasing access to essential medicines and technologies in poor countries threatened by the global AIDS catastrophe.

These documents can be downloaded from www.globaltreatmentaccess.org,