

PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON

On the Global Fight Against HIV/AIDS

President Bill Clinton

After leaving office, President Bill Clinton has continued to have a positive impact on the lives of millions, working to solve some of the world's biggest challenges through the Clinton Foundation. He launched the Clinton Foundation HIV/AIDS Initiative to expand essential access to lifesaving medication and to help developing countries systematize their treatment approach.

→ clintonfoundation.org; mycommitment.org

In the early 1980s Hillary and I each lost a close friend to HIV/AIDS. I still remember sitting beside my friend's hospital bed, feeling powerless to help him and thinking we had to do something to stop all these tragic deaths.

When I was president, we greatly increased funding for AIDS care, treatment, and prevention, contributing nearly twenty-five percent of what was then being spent to fight AIDS in developing countries, and worked to create the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. After leaving office, I attended the 2002 International AIDS Conference in Barcelona with Nelson Mandela, who encouraged me to do more in the fight against HIV/AIDS. My foundation began by negotiating dramatic reductions in the price of antiretrovirals (ARVs) and testing equipment, in order to make them available to the people who need them most.

A great disparity still exists between the developed and developing world in terms of access to affordable, safe, and effective treatments for HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. In Africa, one in four people who die this year—including a large number of children—will die from AIDS, TB, malaria, or another infectious disease, in many cases because they do not have access to the safest and most effective treatments. My foundation has negotiated new pricing agreements that have made high-quality treatments more affordable. In 2003 the Clinton HIV/AIDS Initiative (CHAI) negotiated a decrease of more than fifty percent in the price of adult first-line regimen treatments. Since its inception, CHAI has negotiated breakthrough ARV price reductions with seven suppliers on more than forty formulations and has negotiated significant price reductions with twelve suppliers for sixteen HIV/AIDS diagnostic tests. Now 1.4 million people in more than sixty nations are getting ARVs under our low-price agreements, but there are still more than seven million people in immediate need of treatment.

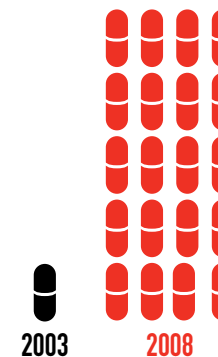
While lowering the cost of drugs is immensely important, we must also focus on getting treatment to the most vulnerable populations, including children. In 2005, when we started our pediatric AIDS program, two million children around the world were infected with HIV/

AIDS, and more than a third needed treatment immediately in order to live. Though available, drugs for children were often far too expensive and difficult to administer. We worked with UNITAID and other donors to increase access to affordable pediatric

More than ever before, governments are recognizing the importance of taking steps to bring care and treatment to their citizens.

FACT

At the beginning of 2003, there were only about 150,000 people in the developing world (outside of Brazil) with access to the HIV/AIDS treatment they needed. Now, with the help of the Clinton Foundation, there are nearly 3 million people receiving medicines in the developing world.



2003

2008

FACT

After Hurricane Katrina, former president Clinton and former president Bush established the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund to help survivors rebuild. The Fund raised more than \$130 million in two years. They had collaborated previously on relief work after the Indian Ocean tsunami.

drugs that are easier to use, and doubled the number of children getting treatment in thirty-three countries within the first two years.

More than ever before, governments are recognizing the importance of taking steps to bring care and treatment to their citizens. Additionally, the tremendous increase in the number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has helped supplement the efforts of governments. This cooperation has allowed my foundation to help reorganize the market for drugs and diagnostics used to treat HIV/AIDS and strengthen health systems.

The capacity for private citizens to advance the public good is greater than ever before due to several factors: the concentration of wealth in the hands of people who can make positive change, the growth of NGOs in both developing and developed countries, and the ability for people to take action using technology and the Internet. I encourage people to get involved with organizations that are fighting HIV/AIDS, whether here at home or globally, by giving time or money. Also, if you are a health-care worker or are involved in the health-care field, you can make significant impact by volunteering your services in the developing countries hit hardest by HIV/AIDS.

I am amazed at the innovative ways people are getting involved to turn the tide of this pandemic around the world. In 2005 I convened the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) to bring together heads of state, business leaders, NGOs, philanthropists, and many others to discuss pressing global challenges, but most importantly to identify creative ways to improve global health and make commitments to take action. CGI allowed us to match people who have innovative ideas with those who can fund them, as well as with reliable partners to do the work on the ground. In its first three years, CGI has inspired nearly 1,000 "Commitments to Action," which are improving the lives of more than two million people around the world. We've expanded this model to encourage young people to make commitments to take action as well. In 2008 the first Clinton Global Initiative University meeting was held to inspire young people and give them a platform to make positive changes in their communities and around the world.

I stay motivated by the evidence that our efforts are truly making a difference.

One of the most innovative commitments came from a man in India who discovered that the only HIV/AIDS prevention booklets available in his community were printed in Hindi, but the local dialect is Telugu. He began translating these pamphlets so that everyone could have access to this potentially lifesaving information. This simple idea will have a major impact on his community.

In 2007 CGI launched MyCommitment.org, an online portal to encourage people to make a commitment to give in any way they can. The site has a wealth of information on how to put your unique talents into action, and in its first six months, visitors from

more than 185 countries collectively pledged more than 92,000 volunteer hours, \$1.5 million, and more than 40,000 items to those in need.

I stay motivated by the evidence that our efforts are truly making a difference. While touring a hospital in Lesotho, I met an adorable, lively little girl named Arietta. When we met, she took my hand and started dancing with me, right there in the clinic's hallway. Without her AIDS medication, Arietta wouldn't be alive today. Thanks to these treatments, she's not just alive—she can dance and play like any other child. I've met lots of children like her in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean—that's more than enough motivation for anyone.

FACT

In 2008 UNITAID and the Clinton Foundation HIV/AIDS Initiative announced new agreements with generic drug manufacturers that made available new and more affordable child-friendly HIV/AIDS medication.

