

**Message from Dr. Arif Alvi**  
**President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan**

(On the occasion of World AIDS Day – 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2018)

World AIDS day, is commemorated each year to reiterate our pledge to combat the HIV epidemic by promoting awareness, facilitating the uptake of preventive and treatment services and taking steps to address disease associated stigma and discrimination. Each year, this fatal disease claims thousands of lives around the world and Pakistan is also confronted with a growing challenge of this menace.

World AIDS Day calls for concerted efforts and engagement by all segments of the society including academia, religious scholars, media and civil society to join hands in the fight against HIV and AIDS. The Government of Pakistan is providing high impact comprehensive HIV prevention services, free of cost HIV diagnostic and curative services to key affected populations and people living with HIV. Multi-sectoral engagement, equity and respect for human rights, social justice and access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services are the cornerstones of an effective HIV response.

HIV and AIDS world over has been associated with unacceptable social behaviors leading to stigma and discrimination that has led to reduced uptake of HIV services. As a consequence this menace is spreading silently. The theme of World AIDS Day this year has been titled “Prevent, test and treat” which accurately defines the HIV management cascade.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the Government’s commitment to work towards elimination of HIV and AIDS in the country. The Federal and Provincial governments are cognizant of their responsibilities and accord high priority to prevention and treatment of this disease. It is heartening to learn that Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination is making concerted efforts to address various risk factors associated with HIV and AIDS.

On this Day, let us pledge to work towards HIV and AIDS free Pakistan.

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