



**SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION
FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION
SECRETARIAT**



Message

“Overcoming Disruption, Transforming the AIDS Response.”

On this World AIDS Day, the SAARC Region reaffirms its solidarity with the global community as we collectively commemorate the day. This observance serves as a significant occasion to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS, to express unity with those affected, to honor the lives lost, and to advocate for sustained progress in prevention, treatment, and care.

The realization of the global objective of ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030 requires a comprehensive and inclusive approach. Such an approach must not only address the needs of people living with and affected by HIV, but also confront the broader social and structural determinants that contribute to vulnerability. In this regard, renewed commitment and a transformative approach to HIV financing and partnerships are crucial for accelerate progress.

This year’s theme, **“Overcoming Disruption, Transforming the AIDS Response,”** underscores the collective responsibility of governments, communities, researchers, healthcare professionals, funders, and the media to act in concert, ensuring that no one is left behind in the regional and global response to HIV/AIDS.

HIV/AIDS continues to represent a significant public health challenge within the SAARC Region. In 2024, an estimated 40.8 million people were living with HIV worldwide, and approximately 630,000 lives were lost due to HIV-related causes. Within the SAARC Region, it is estimated that 3.01 million individuals are living with HIV/AIDS, with 67,520 new infections and 47,200 AIDS related deaths recorded in 2024. Notwithstanding these figures, the Region as a whole continues to be designated as low-prevalence, with overall adult HIV prevalence remaining below 1%.

The SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC), in close collaboration with the National AIDS Control Programmes (NACPs), remains steadfast in its efforts to address the continuing challenge posed by HIV/AIDS across the Region. In this regard, the Centre has formulated the SAARC Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS, designed to assist Member States in advancing meaningful progress in tackling the complex dimensions of the epidemic. The vision guiding this Regional Strategy is to halt and reverse, the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS, strengthen sustained leadership commitment, and ensure that individuals living with HIV receive appropriate treatment, care, and the dignity they rightfully deserve within their communities.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the National HIV/AIDS Programmes of the SAARC Member States for their steadfast commitment and continued efforts in curbing the spread of this serious public health challenge. Moving forward, it is imperative to prioritize smart investments and adopt evidence-informed policies to guarantee equitable access to prevention, treatment, and quality care for all.

(Md. Golam Sarwar)
Secretary General of SAARC

Kathmandu, 26 November 2025