

together is the best response to global health issues in general. I've seen the impact that HIV care, prevention and treatment programmes have on strengthening health systems. I wonder whether we could have avoided the current situation of multidrug resistance in tuberculosis patients if the communities working on HIV and tuberculosis had been working more closely together from the beginning. My message to the global health community is that we must continue the efforts that we started, with a strong commitment from governments in industrialized countries. The transmission of this virus is easily prevented and the promotion of practices such as condom use are key. We also need to promote testing to enable early diagnosis and treatment.

*Q: Can you name an example where this is already happening?*

A: In Cambodia there has been an improvement overall in the health system as a result of specific work on

HIV. In 1995, the country didn't really have a functioning health system. By 2008, it had 50 sites for patients with opportunistic infections and antiretroviral treatment, 26 sites for paediatric HIV care and 4 sites for monitoring CD4+ counts. With the support of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, 30 000 patients are now enrolled in HAART (highly active antiretroviral therapy) programmes. We expect that everyone who needs treatment there will be covered by 2010. The effect is not only improving the health of people with HIV but of those with other diseases such as tuberculosis.

*Q: What projections do you have for a child born with HIV today?*

A: As a researcher, I lack the ability to be completely optimistic. But if we can treat people early, then we can bring them hope. Prolonging life might provide time to develop new strategies for the future. I'm not sure that we will succeed in eradicating the disease but I

am convinced that we'll be able to treat all HIV carriers so that they no longer have detectable levels of the virus and cannot transmit it to others.

*Q: How has winning the Nobel Prize affected you?*

A: I feel an enormous responsibility. I hope that I will be able to convey a strong message to the authorities, to political organizations and to youth that it's time to provide incentives to young researchers to work on HIV. We strongly need new spirit if we want to develop creative, novel strategies for a vaccine. We need to encourage scientists from other areas, such as immunology, even nanotechnology. Myself, I want to go back to the lab! At one point in my life, I wondered whether I had made the right choice to concentrate on this particular virus. But, for me, it's sufficient to go to Africa or south-east Asia and interact with people living with HIV. The motivation comes when I feel that I can really help the people affected. ■

## Recent news from WHO

- More than 2000 children die each day as a result of unintentional or accidental injuries, according to a report by WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund released on 10 December. Read the report, entitled **World report on child injury prevention**, here: [http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/child/injury/world\\_report/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/child/injury/world_report/en/index.html)
- As of 9 December, Zimbabwe's Ministry of Health reported 16 141 suspected **cholera** cases resulting in 775 deaths since August 2008 in two-thirds of the country's 62 districts. WHO said that the overall case fatality rate was 4.8%. WHO is establishing a cholera control and command centre, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare and other health partners.
- In a meeting held by WHO in Ottawa, Canada, on 1–4 December, food safety experts set a level of 0.2 milligrams of **melamine** per kilogram of body weight as the maximum that can be tolerated by a person. The chemical was found in milk, milk products and other animal-origin products in recent months.
- Annual **measles deaths** fell globally by 74% between 2000 and 2007, WHO announced on 4 December, from an estimated 750 000 to 197 000.
- Michel Sidibé of Mali was appointed the new **Executive Director of UNAIDS** on 1 December, World AIDS Day. Sidibé takes over from Dr Peter Piot on 1 January 2008.
- Lack of availability of **essential medicines** in the public sector drives patients to pay higher prices in the private sector or to go without, according to a WHO study reported in the online edition of the *Lancet* on 1 December.
- Universal and annual voluntary **HIV testing** followed by immediate antiretroviral therapy – irrespective of clinical stage or CD4+ level – can reduce new HIV cases by 95% within 10 years, according to new findings based on a mathematical model developed by a group of HIV specialists at WHO. WHO said that these findings, published in the *Lancet* on 26 November, aimed to stimulate discussion and further research and did not imply any change in WHO guidance.
- Delegates at the **Global Ministerial Forum on Research for Health** issued a Call to Action urging governments to allocate at least 2% of the budgets of health ministries to research and development agencies. The 17–19 November meeting in Bamako, Mali, also urged governments to pursue innovative financing mechanisms for research for health and to link evidence to policy-making.
- The first WHO Congress on Traditional Medicine took place in Beijing, China, 7–9 November, and was opened by the Director-General and attended by experts from more than 70 countries. During the Congress participants adopted the Beijing Declaration on **traditional medicine**. The Declaration aims to promote the safe and effective use of traditional medicine, and to integrate traditional medicine into national health care systems.

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