



Message from

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WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region

on the occasion of

**WORLD AIDS DAY**

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**On World AIDS Day 2023, we take the opportunity to advocate for increased access to HIV testing in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.**

Our Region remains challenged by persistent gaps in diagnosing people living with HIV, especially among the most vulnerable populations. As of the end of 2022, only 38% of an estimated 490 000 people living with HIV (PLHIV) know their status. One reason for this is the slow and varied adoption of differentiated approaches to HIV testing services, which hinders access to treatment and leaves a high number of PLHIV at risk of deteriorating health and unknowingly transmitting the infection to others.

Stigma and discrimination, conflicts and emergencies all make it essential to develop alternatives to traditional testing approaches based in centralized facilities. HIV self-testing is one way to reach those who might otherwise not seek routine testing facilities. Providing a convenient and user-friendly testing method enables more people to get tested in their own time and place.

Such examples from the Region and beyond demonstrate the importance of HIV self-testing in achieving national and global goals. However, the Region is lagging in adopting this approach, with only two countries implementing it at sufficient scale. Through collaboration with partners, the private sector and manufacturers, we are advocating for governments, health care providers, and community organizations to accelerate the adoption of HIV self-testing as an additional approach to knowing one's HIV status.

By advocating for HIV self-testing, we strive to empower every individual to take charge of their health, in line with our regional vision of health for all by all. Let this World AIDS Day be a time to embrace innovation, such as HIV self-testing, to end AIDS by 2030.

**SELF-TEST  
FOR HIV**  
**Better health is in  
your hands.**

