Medical Xpress

# New UN AIDS deputy hails Brazil progress

December 22 2012

The newly appointed deputy chief of the United Nations HIV-fighting program, Brazilian Luiz Loures, hailed his own country's achievements in the fight against the deadly global epidemic in an interview published Saturday.

"We are beginning to talk of the end of the epidemic. Scientific progress makes it possible," Loures told the daily Folha de Sao Paulo, estimating the milestone could come within the next 15 years.

"We will not succeed in eradicating the virus, which is an issue for a more distant future. But we will be able to say there is no more epidemic," he clarified.

An estimated 490,000 Brazilians live with the HIV virus that causes AIDS and the annual AIDS deaths stand at 15,000, UN statistics show.

But Brazil has successfully stabilized the pandemic within its borders, recording a 0.61 percent drop in new cases from 2009 to 2010 according to health ministry figures.

The veteran AIDS expert said to maintain the momentum, Latin America's dominant power, which saw its first AIDS case in 1982, "must continue its policies and intensify it where necessary."

He stressed the need to step up prevention particularly among vulnerable groups, such as gays and drug users.

Brazil offers free anti-retroviral drugs (ARV) treatment to HIV-positive citizens, a program that ignited controversy when it was announced in 1996 because of concerns about drug resistance and violation of pharmaceutical copyright.

But a major factor in Brazil's success has been its ability to produce several AIDS drugs locally. The country has a large pharmaceutical industry and around 40 percent of ARVs currently purchased by the government are manufactured domestically.

Loures takes up his new duties at the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) on January 1.

(c) 2012 AFP

Citation: New UN AIDS deputy hails Brazil progress (2012, December 22) retrieved 19 April 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-12-aids-deputy-hails-brazil.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.