

Namibia forced to roll back free condom programme

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Reduced donor funding has forced the Namibian government to shrink the supply of free condoms, a government report said Tuesday, threatening the country's fight against sexually transmitted diseases.

A ministry of health and social services study seen by AFP shows free condom distribution has fallen from 25 million condoms five years ago to 15 million in 2011-2012.

The supply of female condoms over the same period dropped from 499,000 to 281,000.

One of the key donors, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has in the past years scaled back funding.

According to the ministry, although funding by Global Fund accounts for a substantial decline in the last two years, "free issue condom distribution was on a downward spiral before the withdrawal."

About 70 percent of the free issue condoms are procured by the state, in this sparsely populated country of 2.1 million.

Namibia has been lauded by international organisations for its fight against TB and AIDS, but the country is battling an increasing rate of teenage pregnancies.

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