Donor Funding Cuts to Africa Threaten HIV/AIDS Progress

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A study by Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), or Doctors Without Borders, shows that widespread donor funding cuts are a threat to Africa's progress against HIV/AIDS, the *Associated Press* reports.

MSF looked at HIV/AIDS programs in the Congo, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Donors have asked programs in those countries to stop taking enrollments, and people have been turned away because there's not enough medication.

Donors claim the global recession is forcing them to decrease funds, said Eric Goemaere, medical coordinator of MSF in South Africa. But, he adds, this is no excuse to forgo their commitments to fighting HIV/AIDS in Africa.

According to the article, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, a major independent supporter of worldwide HIV/AIDS programs, was under pressure from wealthy governments to cut back. The fund will determine its budget for the next three years in October.

While the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is also a major funder of HIV/AIDS programs worldwide, its budget has flatlined at a time of increasing need.

Eric Gossby, head of PEPFAR, said its budget had increased from $6.8 billion to nearly $7 billion for 2011 and the number of people supported through PEPFAR increased from 1.6 million to nearly 2.5 million in 2009.

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