

NEW YORK, US, September 19 (Infosplusgabon) - U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is due to launch a new strategy to guide U.S. global AIDS programmes for the next three years on Tuesday, during his engagement at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

According to official information obtained here, the new strategy calls for the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief to "accelerate implementation in a subset of 13 high-burden countries that have the potential to achieve epidemic control by 2020."

Those 13 countries are Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. They were selected based on their HIV and AIDS burden; rate of new HIV infections; treatment coverage; number of AIDS-related deaths; and the potential for achieving epidemic control by 2020, said a senior State Department official.

Asked whether the "acceleration" of efforts in 13 countries would require the "deceleration" of efforts in other countries, the official told Devex, the media platform for the global development community, that PEPFAR will continue to invest in more than 50 countries under the new strategy.

The initiative will maintain lifesaving antiretroviral treatment for all the people PEPFAR supports, provide greater services for orphans and vulnerable children, and ensure that the most vulnerable and key populations have access to essential services for preventing and treating HIV, the official said.

In his 2018 budget request, President Donald Trump proposed a 17 percent cut to PEPFAR — from US\$4.6 billion to \$3.8 billion. The U.S. Congress has consistently pushed back against cuts to a global health programme that benefits from wide bipartisan support.

“This bold course toward epidemic control is only possible with continued aggressive focus, quarterly analysis, and partner alignment for maximum impact,” the new ‘Epidemic Control Strategy’ reads.

The new strategy will be implemented beginning in fiscal year 2018, the State Department official said, and reiterated that it does not mean PEPFAR will be “focusing implementation on fewer places,” but rather “seizing the unique opportunity to particularly accelerate progress in 13 high-burden countries that have the potential to reach epidemic control in the next three years.”

FIN/INFOSPLUSGABON/AOM/GABON 2017

© Copyright Infosplusgabon