

Compromise and action: the engagement of over 40 cities in Brazil to Fast Track their response and reach 90-90-90 by 2020

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Background

On World AIDS Day 2014, respective Mayors from around the world came together in Paris, France, to sign a declaration to end the AIDS epidemic in their cities. By signing the Paris Declaration, the Mayors commit to putting cities on the Fast-Track to ending the AIDS epidemic through a set of commitments. Those commitments include achieving the UNAIDS 90-90-90 treatment targets, to focus on the communities most affected by HIV, to mobilize resources for the better integration of public health and development, to build and accelerate urban HIV strategies and to use the AIDS response as a catalyst for positive social transformation.

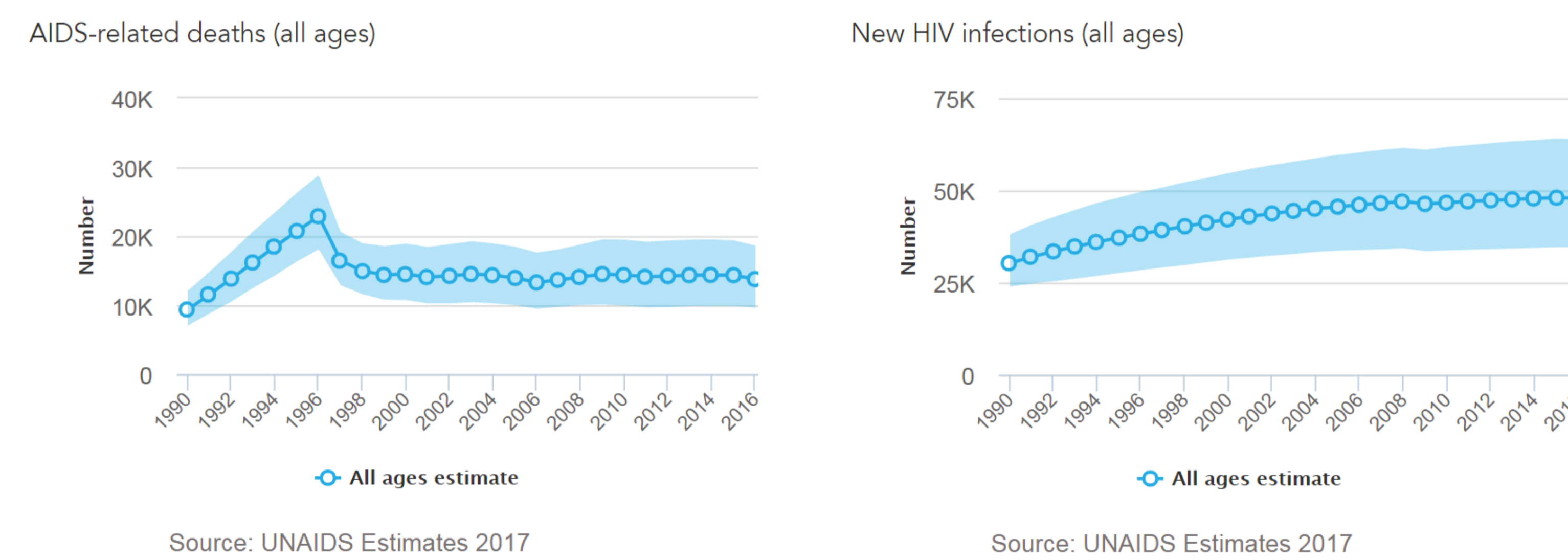


Mayors of New York and Paris convene a global meeting of mayors on ending AIDS in cities

Cities play a critical role in delivering on the 2016 United Nations Political Declaration on Ending AIDS. The risk of contracting HIV and vulnerability to HIV, STIs and TB infection is often higher in urban areas as compared to rural areas. This is due to urban dynamics such as social networking, migration, unemployment and social and economic inequalities. Urban strategies and actions are therefore central to driving the Fast-Track approach and will, to a large extent, determine success in ending AIDS at the national and global levels.

Over 50% of the world's population live in cities. In Latin America, the proportion is even larger: over 80%. Projections demonstrate that by 2020, 9 out of 10 Brazilians will live in urban areas. The federative governance structure of the country empowers States and municipalities with independent budgets and framework for implementation of programmes and politics. Therefore, advocacy and political mobilization also needs to happen at state or city levels.

Brazil has a Unified Health System (SUS) that offers PrEP, PEP testing, treatment and other elements of the combination prevention free of charge. However, compromise at Federal-level has not been enough to halt the epidemic: despite its efforts, Brazil has about 40,000 new HIV infections and about 12,000 deaths per year. Besides that, competing challenges are presented to cities, i.e. violence (over 60,000 people were assassinated in 2017), corruption, epidemics (such as Zika and yellow fever), international and national migration, etc.



Methods

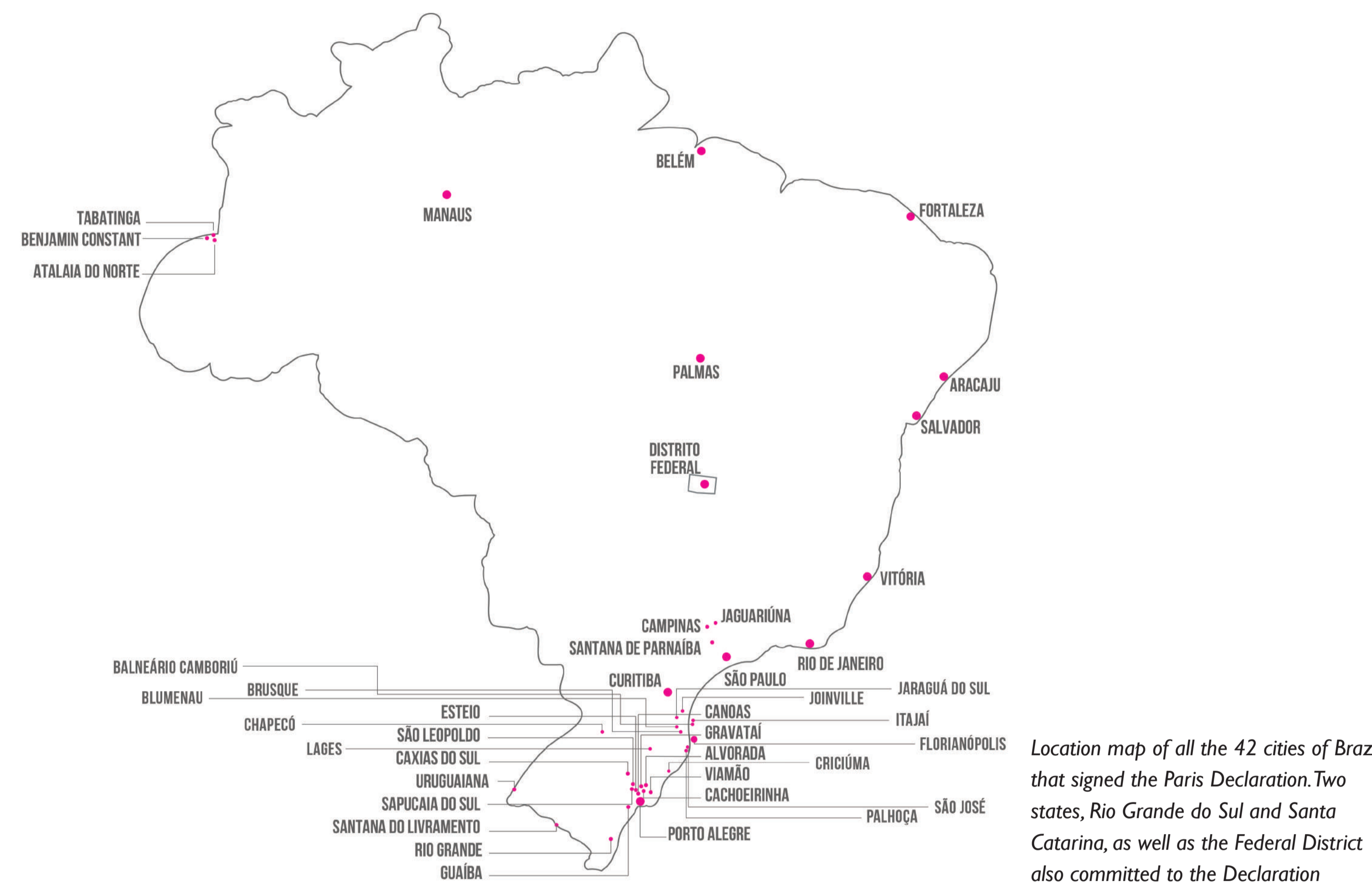
UNAIDS used the movement of Fast Track cities to gather support of Governors, Mayors and local level administrations to accelerate the AIDS response in Brazil. Through an extensive advocacy strategy, over 40 priority cities, the states of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina, and the Federal District signed the Declaration. The population in these localities is of 47 million people combined. This way, a network was formed at country-level and lessons can be shared.



14 priority cities of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, and the state government itself, signed the Paris Declaration in 2015.



Meeting of the National Front of Mayors celebrates that seven more cities of the state of São Paulo signed the Paris Declaration in 2017



Location map of all the 42 cities of Brazil that signed the Paris Declaration. Two states, Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina, as well as the Federal District also committed to the Declaration

The latest signature event was held in June 2018, in the city of Florianópolis during the Congress of Mayors of the State of Santa Catarina. During the event, 12 priority cities and the State of Santa Catarina signed the Paris Declaration. Santa Catarina is one of the states most affected by the AIDS epidemic in Brazil. According to data from the Ministry of Health of 2016, AIDS detection rate in Santa Catarina is 29.2 cases per 100 thousand inhabitants; while the overall rate for the country is 18.5 cases per 100,000 inhabitants. In 2015, the DIAHV of the Ministry of Health created Interfederative Cooperation between the Government of Santa Catarina, the Federal Government and the 12 municipalities of Santa Catarina considered strategic to prioritize prevention actions and greater access to HIV diagnosis, since they have the highest rates of detection of AIDS cases in the state. The event was attended by the Director of UNAIDS in Brazil, Georgiana Braga-Orillad, the Director of the HIV/AIDS and Viral Hepatitis Department (DIAHV) of the Ministry of Health, Adele Benzaken, and the Secretary of Health of the State of Santa Catarina, Acélio Casagrande, Mayors and city representatives.



12 priority cities of the state of Santa Catarina signed the Paris Declaration in 2018.

Since 2014, UNAIDS office in Brazil has been providing support to priority cities to Fast-Track their HIV responses, to deliver on the commitments of the Paris Declaration to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030 and to address disparities in access to basic health and social services, social justice and economic opportunities.

In Salvador, which was one of the first Brazilian cities to sign the Declaration, UNAIDS partnered with the Ministry of Health to support the city in monitoring the fast-tracking of the response and built a training for the development of the 90-90-90 cascade. As part of its commitment to the 90-90-90 targets, the municipality has largely expanded the availability of testing sites in the city's public health system. UNAIDS also supported the development of several campaigns to promote HIV prevention with focus on young people from key populations, including during Carnival festivities.



Volunteers of the initiative 'Pipoca da Prevenção' that took place in Salvador during the carnival

In Porto Alegre, UNAIDS is supporting the municipality in implementing a strategic plan to address the epidemic among women, transgender people, as well as gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM). As part of this strategy, the office has been supporting since 2016 the implementation of the project, that promotes capacity building for health professionals in the public system (SUS) to improve the quality of services provided for transgender people.



Actress Evelyn Ligocki that plays the role of Beth, in the training sessions for health care professionals of the project Transdialogues in Porto Alegre

In the State of Amazonas, UNAIDS partnered with UN Women and UNV to assess gender-based violence among indigenous communities and its correlation with HIV in the region of Alto Solimões.

In São Paulo, UNAIDS has been supporting actions in the city with a local consultant to promote the GIPA Principle (Great Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS) and also with civil society and the private sector. The goal is to provide support for debates, thematic meetings and mobilization of partners in different areas.

Throughout 2017, this enabled UNAIDS to organize and attend important events with focus on the construction of the Agenda for Zero Discrimination in Health Services in order to support the city in achieving the commitments of Paris Declaration.



Ceremony to launch the Virtual Mobilization Campaign against AIDS, at Emílio Ribas Hospital, in São Paulo

To complement these efforts and build civil society capacity, as well as to strengthen youth participation in the response, UNAIDS organized a series of trainings for youth leaderships, including three national workshops in Brasília, and local trainings in São Paulo, Porto Alegre, Manaus and Salvador.

Results

The Fast Track city initiative is an excellent advocacy tool to mobilize support at local level. It gives visibility to the HIV agenda in places where competing themes would otherwise take priority. Through this initiative stakeholders and partners are strengthened and have a formal basis to demand action to reach the targets and the commitment made by Mayors. We have witnessed the Declaration being used to demand action by civil society, but also by a city by public health workers and other managers involved in the response. The Declaration also gave the Joint UN Team on HIV/AIDS a powerful tool to work closely to cities in providing technical support and also as a tool to initiate dialogue on related issues. Through the Declaration, innovative initiatives were initiated, others gained visibility and some were also expanded.



Viamão, signatory town in Rio Grande do Sul, developed a project about sexual education and HIV. The project is a traveling exhibition that aims to talk about sex, HIV and prevention in a very relaxed way with people from all ages.

Conclusion

The Sustainable Development Goals Objectives aim to leave no one behind. To be able to reach these goals, action needs to be taken at local level, and urban centers provide an important opportunity for programmes and politics to reach people who are frequently left behind in the response to AIDS, including women, youth, gays and other men who have sex with men, migrants, people who inject drugs, sex workers, and transgender people.

In this way, the Paris Declaration is an indispensable instrument for political commitment both to treatment goals and to respect for the most vulnerable populations. Local governments that would not pay attention to social policies regarding HIV and its key-populations are impelled to incorporate those topics on their political agenda, as well as it gives civil society an apparatus to demand from the local governments.

As a recent example of how the Paris Declaration can foster a high level political commitment, UNAIDS organized in July 2018, the second meeting of the UN Expanded Theme Group on HIV/AIDS in 2018 hosted by the governor of the state of Rio Grande do Sul Mr. José Ivo Sartori. The meeting focused on the context of the epidemic in the state, which has the highest HIV prevalence of the country. Over 60 local health authorities from the 15 signatory cities in the state were present at the meeting and four local good practices were showcased.



UN Expanded Theme Group on HIV/AIDS hosted by the governor of the state of Rio Grande do Sul in the Piratini Palace, 2018

Acknowledgements

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