

## 'Complacency' may lead to HIV resurgence, warn experts

Prince Harry posing with a boy at the AIDS Conference in Amsterdam. | Photo Credit: [YVES HERMAN](#)

A world AIDS assembly opens in Amsterdam on Monday hoping to harness the star power of activists Elton John and Prince Harry to bolster the battle against an epidemic, experts warn may yet spiral out of control.

Thousands of delegates — researchers, campaigners, activists and people living with the killer virus — have arrived for the 22nd International AIDS Conference amid warnings that “dangerous complacency” may cause an unstoppable resurgence.

In recent days, experts have alerted that new HIV infections, while down overall, have surged in some parts of the world as global attention has waned and funding levelled off. And they lamented that too sharp a focus on virus-suppressing treatment may have diverted attention from basic prevention programmes such as condom distribution, with the result that the AIDS-causing virus is still spreading easily among vulnerable groups.

“The encouraging reductions in new HIV infections that occurred for about a decade has emboldened some to declare that we are within reach of ending AIDS,” Peter Piot, founder of the UNAIDS agency, said last week. However, “there is absolutely no evidence to support this conclusion,” he insisted, and warned: “The language on ending AIDS has bred a dangerous complacency.”

A UNAIDS report has warned of a difficult road ahead even as it reported an overall drop in new infections and AIDS deaths, and a record number of people on life-saving antiretroviral therapy (ART).

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