Rwanda has become one of the few countries in the world—and the only one in East Africa—to meet the United Nations' "95-95-95" targets in the fight against HIV, according to a new report released Wednesday by UNAIDS.

The report, unveiled during the 2025 UNAIDS Global AIDS Update event in South Africa on July 10, praised Rwanda for its remarkable progress. The country has achieved the global benchmarks of 95% of people living with HIV knowing their status, 95% of those diagnosed receiving treatment, and 95% of those on treatment achieving viral suppression.

"This puts Rwanda firmly on the path to ending AIDS as a public health threat," UNAIDS said.

The achievement reflects strong political leadership, a robust health system, and deep community involvement, the agency added. Rwanda also ranked among the few nations to nearly eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV, with over 95% of pregnant women living with HIV receiving appropriate treatment.

The update comes ahead of the International AIDS Society (IAS) Conference on HIV Science, set to take place July 13–17 in Kigali. The biennial event will bring together global researchers, policymakers, and advocates to explore the latest advances in HIV prevention, treatment, and care.

UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima (photo), speaking at the report's launch, warned of a looming financial crisis threatening global progress.

"The HIV response is facing a funding crisis," said Byanyima, who also serves as a UN Under-Secretary-General. "We must reprioritize and mobilize more resources for HIV programs—and do so efficiently."

The UNAIDS report noted that, by the end of 2024, HIV programs worldwide had saved 26.9 million lives and reduced AIDS-related deaths by 56% since 2010. However, the number of new infections remained stubbornly high, with 1.3 million reported globally in 2024—unchanged from the year before.

While Rwanda leads in the region, many neighboring countries are still struggling to meet the global HIV targets. Uganda and Tanzania have made notable progress in preventing mother-to-child transmission but have not yet reached the 95-95-95

milestones. Kenya, a regional healthcare leader, is falling short in prevention funding, while Burundi and South Sudan lag behind due to fragile systems and data limitations.

“Rwanda’s progress shows what is possible with strong leadership, effective systems, and community ownership,” the report said. It also credited Rwanda with reducing stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV—key barriers to care that remain high elsewhere.

Despite the progress, the report raised alarms over shrinking international support. UNAIDS said HIV funding in Eastern and Southern Africa declined by 6% since 2020, especially affecting prevention services such as education and condom distribution.

Byanyima also criticized the financial burden placed on African nations. She noted that in 2023, Africa received $72 billion in aid but lost $88 billion through illicit financial flows, along with another $101 billion in debt repayments.

“This drains African resources—often for problems not caused internally,” she said. “What we’re telling rich countries is: do the right thing. Agree on a fast and fair process to restructure debt so that countries can free up resources for critical sectors like health.”

She also called for the conclusion of a UN Global Tax Convention to help countries recover revenue lost to tax avoidance by multinational corporations.

“Yes, maintain aid,” Byanyima said. “But the real solution lies in unlocking funds tied up in debt repayments and tackling tax avoidance.”

Those financial and policy issues are expected to dominate discussions at the upcoming IAS 2025 Conference in Kigali. The event will highlight not only scientific innovation but also the political and economic challenges threatening to derail global efforts against HIV.

Rwanda, widely seen as a model of success, is expected to take center stage.

As the world strives to end AIDS by 2030, UNAIDS said Rwanda’s story offers hope but also a warning: gains can be lost without urgent, sustained investment.