

## WHO Warns Funding Cuts Risk HIV Response



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MANILA, June 19— The World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for the Western Pacific

on Friday warned that disruptions in global funding could undermine efforts to curb the spread of HIV in Asia and the Pacific, home to the world's second-largest HIV epidemic.

The WHO regional agency said about 7 million people in the region are living with HIV, with an estimated 280,000 new infections and 120,000 AIDS-related deaths recorded annually. Countries including Fiji, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea are experiencing some of the world's fastest-growing HIV epidemics.

The agency said the financing landscape has changed significantly as global development assistance has declined sharply and international support for HIV programmes continues to fall.

Around 76 percent of HIV prevention spending in the region still comes from external sources, leaving outreach and community-led services for key populations vulnerable as funding decreases.

It urged governments to take greater responsibility by replacing external funding, integrating HIV services into universal health coverage and primary healthcare systems, strengthening national data and health systems, addressing social barriers to access, and accelerating access to innovation and prevention tools.