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**ARVs raise chances of longer life by 13 years**

An Aids patient takes her daily dose of life-saving anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs. Photo/FILE

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By Nation Correspondent

The life expectancy of Kenyans is expected to increase to 69 years from 56 years.

This increase has been mostly attributed to the advances made in reducing the spread of HIV and Aids, according to a UN agency.

Expanded antiretroviral (ARV) treatment programmes have reduced the mortality rates recorded from HIV and Aids.

The Public Health ministry supplies about 75 per cent of ARVs in Kenya with more than 250,000 patients enrolled in the scheme. Some 1.5 million Kenyans are HIV positive.

According to the UN, Kenya’s population will grow from 38,610,097 to 40,926,703 by October. A 3 per cent increase per annum, which means about 7,150 births daily, indicates a high fertility rate and low use of family planning.

An average woman in Kenya gives birth to at least four or five children in her lifetime.

According to the UN 2010 Revision of World Population Prospects, the world population will increase from 6 billion to 7 billion by October.

UN Population Fund executive director Babatunde Osotimehin said the agency would hold activities to engage partners and the public on the significance of this population milestone, saying, “A world of 7 billion is both a challenge and an opportunity.”

UNFPA is planning a seven-day countdown starting on October 24 — United Nations Day — and leading up to the birth of the 7 billionth baby.

These events will culminate in the launch of this year’s population report.