

## PRESS RELEASE

### **UNAIDS appoints Victoria Beckham as International Goodwill Ambassador**

**GENEVA/NEW YORK, 25 September 2014**—The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has appointed leading fashion designer Victoria Beckham as UNAIDS International Goodwill Ambassador. The announcement was made at a special event held during the 69th United Nations General Assembly in New York.

“I dream of a generation free from HIV and I know that Victoria’s support will help us to achieve this shared goal,” said Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS. “Her creativity, innovation and outreach will amplify our efforts and bring us one important step closer towards ending the AIDS epidemic.”

In her new role as an Ambassador for UNAIDS Mrs Beckham will work towards ensuring that all children are born free from HIV and that children and women who are living with and affected by HIV have access to medicines and care.

“This is the beginning of an important journey for me. As a woman and a mother I have a responsibility to support other women,” said Mrs Beckham. “I am proud and honoured to be working with UNAIDS in this new role to help to raise resources and awareness to support and empower women and children affected by HIV.”

In February this year Ms Beckham visited HIV clinics in Cape Town, South Africa, where she learned about the importance of antiretroviral therapy and about how children are being left behind in accessing treatment.

Antiretroviral therapy can reduce the risk of a mother living with HIV passing the virus to her child to below 5%. However, in 2013, one third of pregnant women living with HIV did not have access to the life-saving medicines and 240 000 children became infected with HIV.

In 2013, less than half of all children who were exposed to HIV were tested for the virus within the optimum three-month period and only 24% had access to life-saving treatment. Without treatment, half of all children born with HIV will die by the age of two and the majority will die by the age of five.

Over the past five years providing access to antiretroviral medicines for pregnant women living with HIV has helped 900 000 children to be born free from HIV. UNAIDS and partners are working to ensure that all children, everywhere are born free from HIV and have access to the medicines, care and support they need.

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## **UNAIDS**

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) leads and inspires the world to achieve its shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. UNAIDS unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank—and works closely with global and national partners to maximize results for the AIDS response. Learn more at [unaids.org](http://unaids.org) and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.