

Statement

UNAIDS mourns death of world-renowned musician and humanitarian, Maestro Rostropovich

Geneva, 27 April 2007 – It is with great sadness that UNAIDS has learned of the death of Mstislav Rostropovich who just a month ago celebrated his 80th birthday.

In addition to being a brilliant cellist and gifted conductor, Maestro Rostropovich was a firm defender of human rights, a tireless advocate for AIDS issues and was a much needed voice in raising awareness about HIV prevention, treatment, care and support for children and young people, earning respect and admiration worldwide.

In 2006, Maestro Mstislav Rostropovich was appointed a Special Representative of the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

Upon his appointment, the Maestro expressed his concern about the impact of the AIDS epidemic on children and young people, “Children die every day only because they have no access to prevention, treatment, care, and support that could have saved their lives. This is not only a health issue; it is an issue of fundamental equity and human rights. In my capacity as a UNAIDS Special Representative, I am devoted to saving children’s lives by making world leaders and international communities commit to responding to the AIDS epidemic.”

UNAIDS Executive Director Dr Peter Piot is deeply saddened by the sudden death of the Maestro, “Through his outstanding network in politics, humanitarian affairs and culture, Maestro Rostropovich supported our mission in raising awareness and providing high level advocacy in the AIDS response. His credibility, talent, and energy helped the United Nations send a powerful message that reached the hearts and minds of people throughout the world. We will miss him dearly.”

Contact

Tina Bille | UNAIDS Geneva | +41 22 791 4928 | billet@unaids.org

UNAIDS is an innovative joint venture of the United Nations, bringing together the efforts and resources of the UNAIDS Secretariat and ten UN system organizations in the AIDS response. The Secretariat headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland—with staff on the ground in more than 80 countries. Coherent action on AIDS by the UN system is coordinated in countries through UN theme groups, and joint programmes on AIDS. UNAIDS’ Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Visit the UNAIDS Web site at www.unaids.org