

Press statement

UNAIDS urges continued bold and decisive leadership from G8 countries on AIDS

Commitments on universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support will not be met at the current rate of progress. Increased action and resources are urgently needed.

Geneva, 5 June 2007 – In 2005, G8 leaders made unprecedented commitments on AIDS that led the international community to work towards the goal of ensuring universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by the year 2010. Acting upon this, countries have made significant progress in setting ambitious targets to guide the acceleration of their national AIDS responses.

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is encouraged by latest resource tracking reports that show increases in international financing from the G8, European Commission and other donor governments. We also applaud the increases seen in domestic spending on AIDS and recent announcements to extend and expand investment in the global AIDS response.

However, as the G8 leaders meet this week in Heiligendamm, Germany for the 2007 Summit, UNAIDS remains concerned that commitments to reaching universal access will not be met at the current rate of progress.

Despite increases in funding, according to latest data for 2006, resources available for AIDS still fell dramatically short of the estimated needs by US\$6 billion.

In 2006 there were an additional 4.3 million new HIV infections and the number of people requiring antiretroviral treatment continues to increase. Latest evidence indicates that the 11 million people projected to need antiretroviral treatment by the year 2010 may be underestimated by up to 50%, based on a better understanding of clinical progression to AIDS and new data which shows that starting treatment earlier provides a more effective response.

As such, UNAIDS urges the G8 leaders to translate their previous commitments on AIDS into tangible action and to ensure that additional pledges on AIDS reinforce and build on existing goals.

AIDS is one of the most pressing development issues of our time. While the G8 leaders meet in Germany over three days, an estimated 33,000 people will be newly infected with HIV and nearly 24,000 people will die from AIDS-related illnesses. Africa—a prominent agenda item at the Heiligendamm summit—is a continent where AIDS is a key factor in undermining development.

UNAIDS will continue working with countries to 'make the money work' and to ensure universal access becomes a reality.

AIDS must be a top priority for the G8 this year and every year – in commitments and action.

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