

## Press statement

### **UNAIDS WELCOMES MOVES BY SOUTH AFRICA FOR A UNIFIED RESPONSE TO AIDS**

**Geneva, 13 November 2006** – The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), today expressed its support for the recent positive developments by the South African Government led by Deputy President, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, to strengthen the national response to AIDS.

UNAIDS welcomes the renewed and bold leadership to strengthen the National AIDS Council and unify the national response. This new direction is a critical step that will bolster South Africa's efforts to scale up the AIDS response to new heights. UNAIDS expresses its support for the efforts undertaken by the Deputy President as the Chairperson of the South African National AIDS Council to reach out to civil society and other partners to build an inclusive partnership for a unified national response to the epidemic.

UNAIDS also welcomes the inclusive process that has been put in motion led by the Deputy President, the Ministry of Health and the National AIDS council to finalise a new National Strategic Plan on AIDS 2007 - 2011 in partnership with civil society and other stakeholders. South Africa is encouraged to use this opportunity to develop a comprehensive national strategic plan with clear targets to ensure universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010.

UNAIDS expresses its support and is ready to offer assistance to the Government of South Africa in the development of the National AIDS Plan and efforts to further strengthen the National AIDS Council. UNAIDS regards South Africa as a key player in the global effort to respond to the challenge of AIDS and will continue to include South Africa in global policy debates.

UNAIDS calls on all South Africans to unite behind the efforts of the South African government to scale up the national response to AIDS. Only through a united effort will the country be able to ensure that prevention is effectively scaled up, treatment provided to those in need and care given to the children orphaned and made vulnerable by AIDS.

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