

PRESS STATEMENT

UNAIDS saddened by the death of Marcel van Soest

GENEVA, 23 September 2011— UNAIDS is deeply saddened by the sudden death of Marcel van Soest's, a passionate AIDS activist committed to making the world a better place for people living with and affected by HIV.

“Marcel was first and foremost a true friend and an invaluable partner,” said UNAIDS Executive Director, Michel Sidibe, “I was heartbroken to learn of this news. Marcel reached out to and changed the lives of many people across continents. The AIDS response has suffered a terrible loss with his passing and I mourn for his family and friends.”

Mr Van Soest worked for nearly 10 years with the international NGO Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), including serving as the Operational Director of MSF Holland. In 2004, Marcel became the Executive Director of the World AIDS Campaign where he oversaw its growth from its origins at UNAIDS into one of the leading AIDS advocacy organizations worldwide and a major force for change in the global response to AIDS.

Through his commitment to inclusiveness and focus on human rights, Mr Van Soest worked tirelessly to bring the voices of key populations to the fore front of the AIDS response, in particular those of sex workers, people who use drugs, women and men who have sex with men. Through his outstanding leadership, people everywhere respected his commitment and passion for making a better, more just world for people living with HIV and for making sure that the voice of the communities resonated in the global AIDS agenda.

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UNAIDS

UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, is an innovative United Nations partnership that leads and inspires the world in achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Learn more at unaids.org.