



PRESS RELEASE

UNAIDS and UN Women unite against AIDS

Newest UN organization joins UNAIDS' efforts to ensure greater access to HIV services for women and girls

GENEVA, 5 June 2012—The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) is the eleventh United Nations body to join the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) as a cosponsoring partner.

The official joining of UN Women as a UNAIDS Cosponsor, which was approved at UNAIDS' board meeting today, will further strengthen the UNAIDS family's work on gender equality and HIV and enhance collaboration with governments, international partners, women's organizations and the women's rights movement.

"UN Women is proud to join UNAIDS. We believe that the single most important strategy in dealing with HIV is empowering women and guaranteeing their rights—so that they can protect themselves from infection, overcome stigma, and gain greater access to treatment and care," said Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN Women. "We look forward to expanding our efforts in partnership with the UNAIDS family to address this epidemic."

Gender equality and respect for women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, especially for women living with HIV, are essential for an effective response to HIV. Persistent gender inequalities and women's rights violations are continuing to render women and girls more vulnerable to HIV and prevent them from accessing HIV services. In 2010 there were around 17 million women living with HIV and HIV continues to be the leading cause of death in women of reproductive age.

"I believe we need to and can do much better for women and girls. There are still too few sustainable solutions available for women to protect themselves from HIV, violence and poverty," said Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS. "Partnering with UN Women will strengthen our efforts to promote gender equality and bolster women's empowerment globally through the HIV response."

UNAIDS will collaborate closely with UN Women in a number of areas including: addressing the intersections between HIV and violence against women; integrating gender equality into national HIV planning; and using strategies that promote the leadership and participation of women living with HIV, and women affected by HIV, in decision-making. UNAIDS and UN Women will also work on strengthening national institutions to enable them to deliver on commitments made on gender equality and women's rights in the context of HIV.

"As a young woman living with HIV, I am heartened to see that UNAIDS and UN Women are joining forces against AIDS. I have experienced first-hand how enabling environments and rights-based services can empower women living with HIV to take control over our bodies and our lives," said Helena Nangombe Kandali from Namibia. "UN Women becoming

a cosponsor of UNAIDS is a positive step forward in supporting women the world over, particularly women living with HIV.”

UN Women, established by the UN General Assembly in 2010 brings together four distinct parts of the UN system which focused exclusively on gender equality and women’s empowerment, namely: the Division for the Advancement of Women; the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women; the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women; and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

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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 and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.

UN Women

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. www.unwomen.org