

## Press statement

### **UNAIDS welcomes new partnership to accelerate global HIV vaccine research and development efforts**

**Geneva, 20 February 2007** – The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) welcomes a new collaborative initiative between the Government of Canada and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to accelerate HIV vaccine research and development. The partnership entitled the ‘Canadian HIV Vaccine Initiative’ (CHVI) will contribute to the global effort to develop safe, effective, affordable and globally accessible HIV vaccines.

Through the initiative, support will be given to researchers and research institutions, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, to promote collaboration and strengthen capacity to conduct high-quality clinical trials of HIV vaccines. In addition to establishing a facility to manufacture clinical trial lots of vaccine, the CHVI will improve regulatory capacity, address policy issues and support the development and strengthening of community, legal, ethical and human rights frameworks for HIV vaccines in Canada and in low- and middle-income countries.

“Intensifying HIV prevention is central to UNAIDS’ work globally and in countries,” said Dr Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS. “The forging of new partnerships to enhance the search for an effective HIV vaccine and support the efforts of the Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise is vital to ensuring the sustainability of the global response to AIDS,” he added.

The Canadian government has pledged to commit US\$ 111 million to the initiative and the Bill and Melinda Gated Foundation will contribute US\$ 28 million. UNAIDS congratulates both institutions on their investment and on their commitment to respond to the urgent need to develop essential HIV prevention tools.

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**UNAIDS**, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, brings together the efforts and resources of ten UN system organizations to the global AIDS response. Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Based in Geneva, the UNAIDS secretariat works on the ground in more than 80 countries world wide. Visit the UNAIDS Web site at [www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org)