

Press statement

UNAIDS welcomes G8 reaffirmation of commitment to universal access AIDS goals

Geneva, 8 June 2007 – The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) welcomes G8 leaders reaffirmation of their commitment to work towards the goal of universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010.

UNAIDS also applauds the G8 announcement of a projected \$US60 billion investment in AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria and the strengthening of health systems in Africa, as part of their work towards realizing the Millennium Development Goals. Current estimates show that for AIDS alone, around US\$70 billion will be needed from 2008 – 2010 to enable universal access to be achieved globally.

While encouraged by the increased commitments shown by the G8, UNAIDS urges the leaders to ensure pledges are translated into tangible action. 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 globally 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.

“The G8 has taken significant and necessary steps today but this does not mean that all the funding and action needed is now in place to reach the goals on AIDS,” said UNAIDS Executive Director Peter Piot. “Existing commitments must be honoured and continued bold leadership and allocation of additional resources for AIDS by the G8 and all other countries are still fundamental.”

The AIDS response will have to be sustained - at increasingly high levels - for decades to come. With 11,000 new HIV infections and nearly 8,000 deaths due to AIDS every day, there is no time for complacency.

We welcome the G8’s recognition of UNAIDS mandate to support the universal access process, to monitor its implementation and to hold all parties accountable. We will continue working with countries to ‘make the money work’ and to ensure universal access becomes a reality.

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UNAIDS is an innovative joint venture of the United Nations, bringing together the efforts and resources of the UNAIDS Secretariat and ten UN system organizations in the AIDS response. The Secretariat headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland—with staff on the ground in more than 80 countries. Coherent action on AIDS by the UN system is coordinated in countries through UN theme groups, and joint programmes on AIDS. UNAIDS' Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Visit the UNAIDS Web site at www.unaids.org