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## Press release

# German star footballer Michael Ballack accepts appointment as UNAIDS Special Representative

**Geneva, 25 May 2006** – Michael Ballack has accepted the appointment as a Special Representative for the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). As UNAIDS Special Representative, Michael Ballack will raise awareness on HIV and AIDS with an emphasis on youth and sport.

Michael Ballack has previously been involved in charity events and fund raising. Mr. Ballack is captain of the German National Team and has played in various top football clubs. Through his achievement in the world of sport Mr. Ballack is a role model for many young people and his engagement with UNAIDS will help carry out messages on prevention and support in HIV and AIDS issues.

"I am proud to have Michael Ballack on board as a UNAIDS Special Representative," said Dr Peter Piot, UNAIDS Executive Director. "Through his dedication and eagerness to make a difference, I know he will be a strong voice on HIV and AIDS. Mr Ballack's talent and commitment will inspire young people to be smart about HIV."

 "AIDS is everyone's business. Sport and especially football can help break social barriers and fight stigma and HIV," said Mr. Ballack. "Through sport young people can become more self-confident and protect themselves from HIV. I want today's youth to know the facts about HIV and AIDS. In my new role as UNAIDS Special Representative, I will help save lives by engaging the sports world to take action against AIDS."

According to UNAIDS, the global AIDS epidemic is one of the worst crises affecting the world today. It is likely to have the most severe impact on children and young people. Around half of all new HIV infections are in children and young people under 25. Every minute a child dies of an AIDS-related illness and every minute a child becomes infected with HIV.

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