

## Press statement

### **UNAIDS welcomes release of latest antenatal clinic survey by South Africa's Department of Health**

**Geneva, 8 June 2007** – The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) welcomes the release of the latest antenatal clinic survey by South Africa's Department of Health.

South Africa has produced one of the world's most comprehensive antenatal clinic surveys. In 2006 over 33 000 pregnant women participating in government antenatal clinics were surveyed, compared to over 16 500 women in 2005.

The decline amongst young pregnant women below the age of 20 from 15.9% in 2005 to 13.7% in 2006 provides hopeful signs that HIV prevalence may be starting to decline within this age group. However, the number of new infections amongst young people, estimated at one third of the 500 000 new infections annually remains unacceptably high, reinforcing the need for HIV prevention programmes that target young people.

HIV infection amongst pregnant women in the age group 20 – 39 years of age is worryingly high and in the age group 25 – 34 estimated at close to 40%. This illustrates that women in their reproductive prime are now at greatest risk of HIV infection and underscores the need to accelerate HIV prevention programmes that target the key issues that place women at risk of HIV infection such as multiple concurrent partnerships, gender inequality and violence against women.

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