



## PRESS RELEASE

### **UNAIDS and DPKO shine a light on ending violence against women**

*New initiative launched to address HIV and sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict settings*

**GENEVA, 27 November 2012**—The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is partnering with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to shine a light on ending violence against women, and empowering them to remain free from HIV.

UNAIDS will work together with UN Peacekeepers to distribute inflatable solar-powered lights to women and families, initially in five pilot countries affected by conflict, as a way of broaching the complex and sensitive issues of sexual and gender-based violence against women and HIV. This will be part of the outreach work DPKO and UN Peacekeepers conduct in communities as they secure peace around the world.

“The lights will act as a conversation starter for people to talk about the harmful link between sexual and gender-based violence against women and HIV,” said Luiz Loures, Director of Political and Public Affairs, UNAIDS. “The effects of conflict are especially acute for women and girls. In many settings, widespread sexual violence has been used as a tool of warfare, increasing gender inequalities and contributing to the spread of HIV. Ensuring that women are safe and free from violence is a step towards ensuring they stay free from HIV.”

Conditions of violence and instability in conflict and post-conflict situations can exacerbate the spread of HIV. UN Peacekeepers, because of their extensive contacts with local populations, act as agents of positive change, particularly with respect to preventing sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls and providing psycho-social services to mitigate the impact of violence.

The initiative is part of UNAIDS and DPKO’s commitment to implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1983, adopted in June 2011, which calls for increased efforts by UN Member States to address HIV in UN Peacekeeping missions. Resolution 1983 also calls for HIV prevention efforts among uniformed services to be aligned with efforts to end sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings.

UNAIDS is partnering with the creators of the inflatable solar-powered light, LuminAID, who will be donating up to 1000 lights through their “Give Light, Get Light” campaign. LuminAID will donate one light for every “Give Light, Get Light” package purchased during the coming months.

The initiative is being launched to coincide with the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, which started on 25 November—the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women—and concludes on 10 December 2012, Human Rights Day. The 16 Days campaign is widely used around the world to call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women.

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**Contact**

UNAIDS Geneva | Sophie Barton-Knott | tel. +41 22 791 1697 | [bartonknotts@unaids.org](mailto:bartonknotts@unaids.org)

**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](http://unaids.org) and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.