

UNAIDS, WHO AND UNFPA ENDORSE EUROPEAN UNION STATEMENT ON THE NEED TO SCALE UP HIV PREVENTION

Geneva/New York, 30 November 2005 - The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) endorse today's announcement by the European Union (EU) to intensify HIV prevention efforts. The EU's statement reaffirms the Member States' commitment to tackling HIV and AIDS, particularly in developing countries.

UNAIDS, WHO and UNFPA support the EU's statement, which calls for a rapid increase in the scale and scope of HIV prevention efforts in order to get ahead of the epidemic. The AIDS epidemic can only be reversed if HIV prevention efforts are scaled up as part of a comprehensive response that simultaneously expands access to treatment and care. Universal access to HIV prevention, care and treatment should be the world's immediate goal.

According to the newly published UNAIDS/WHO report on the global AIDS epidemic, sustained HIV prevention programmes have played a key part in bringing down HIV infections in several countries, including Haiti, Kenya, and Zimbabwe. But the stark reality is that despite some gains, there were an additional 5 million infections in 2005, bringing the total number of people living with HIV worldwide to just over 40 million.

Worldwide, less than one in five people at risk of becoming infected with HIV has access to basic prevention services. Only one in ten people living with HIV has been tested and knows their HIV status.

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