

22 September 2004

WORLD AIDS DAY 2004 - *WOMEN, GIRLS, HIV & AIDS*

- **Globally women and girls are becoming infected with HIV at a faster rate than men and boys –**
- **Women now make up around half the people living with HIV –**

Many women and girls are vulnerable to HIV because of the high-risk behavior of others. This year's World AIDS Campaign, which culminates on World AIDS Day – **1 December 2004**, will focus on reducing the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV and AIDS.

The campaign, with the strapline '**Have you heard me today?**', explores how gender inequality fuels the AIDS epidemic. All over the world women do not enjoy the same rights and access to employment, property and education as men. Women and girls are also more likely to face sexual violence. This makes them more vulnerable to HIV and, as the primary care givers, to the impact of AIDS.

In advance of World AIDS Day, UNAIDS is suggesting a number of story and feature angles to explore the campaign theme, including:

- The resilience of women in the face of HIV and AIDS
- The role of women in holding families and communities together
- The role of women leaders in tackling HIV and AIDS
- The role of men and boys in reducing gender inequality
- The impact of unequal property and inheritance rights on women
- The role of education in reducing girls' vulnerability to HIV
- The need for a wider range of female-controlled prevention options (such as the female condom and microbicides) to help women to protect themselves
- Violence against women can accelerate the spread of HIV
- The need to ensure women have equal access to treatment as antiretrovirals are rolled out in developing countries

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