

Themes of the 2005-2010 World AIDS Campaign (WAC)

The 2005-2010 World AIDS Campaign's goal is to ensure governments and all other groups that can make a difference in responding to the AIDS epidemic do keep their promises. In June 2001, 189 Heads of State and government representatives committed to the United Nations Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS - a long list of firm commitments to respond to AIDS that leaders pledged to fulfil. Since then, additional commitments have been made to strengthen the response. Some promises have been kept, many have not, and the pace of the AIDS epidemic continues to outstrip most efforts to deal with it.

The World AIDS Campaign seeks to unite civil society leadership in order to foster a new level of national, regional and global action and accountability in the response to HIV and AIDS. The Campaign aims to be nationally-driven and civil society-led and has two broad themes: "*Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise*" and "*Stop AIDS. Make the Promise*". Both directly relate to WAC's overall goal of energizing and supporting "an effective and sustained response to the AIDS epidemic".

Under Theme 1, the WAC will act to ensure that governments and organizations keep the promises they have made to effectively respond to AIDS. Theme 2 focuses on encouraging individuals to undertake new personal action to counter the devastation caused by HIV and AIDS.

Theme 1: "Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise"

The Campaign stresses that four elements are key to ensuring that promises are kept. Its underlying premise is that strengthening these four core elements will ensure that governments and others will be fully capable of delivering on their promises. The Campaign's thematic activities will therefore focus on these elements:

1. More effective national HIV and AIDS responses. The Campaign will support existing national-level efforts and highlight successful country responses, while linking them to broader grassroots-led campaigns. Country campaigns will be shaped around local needs and priorities, will share lessons learned and resources, and will bring the urgency of frontline experiences to bear upon international HIV and AIDS policy and initiatives.
2. An expanded range of HIV and AIDS partnerships. The WAC will help promote and strengthen partnerships at all levels, focusing on local partners who drive local change, as well as vibrant national-level partnerships supported by a broad global alliance. The Campaign will also focus on extending partnerships to a range of organizations with proven leverage abilities and which are new to the WAC process, for example, from the labour, business and faith-based sectors. The WAC will draw on union skills in advocacy, lobbying and campaigning; on businesses strengths in branding, mobilising resources and communicating with the public; and on the enormous potential of faith groups to campaign for change.
3. Strengthened civil society processes. The WAC believes that civil society has a unique role and responsibility in the AIDS response. Civil society groups support and energize national responses by maintaining public and political will, providing constructive criticism and holding policy makers accountable. Civil society groups foster working in partnerships, and the Campaign will particularly emphasize this by drawing in women's and youth groups, as well as society's most marginalised and vulnerable groups such as sex workers, injecting drug users and men who have sex with men.
4. Adequate financing for the response. As a priority, the WAC will build support for governments and donor organizations to better fund AIDS responses. In doing so it will support efforts to raise more than the US\$ 15 billion that experts say are needed annually to mount an effective response to the AIDS epidemic. Specifically, it will support the activities of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and will support efforts towards additional funding for its activities.

Theme 2: “Stop AIDS. Make the Promise”

Since the beginning of the AIDS epidemic, individual people have played heroic roles in helping and caring for people living with HIV and AIDS. In the early days, while governments and organizations dithered, individuals acted.

The WAC hopes to build on the strengths and contribution of individuals by encouraging more of them to make their own promises to respond to HIV and AIDS at family and community levels. The Campaign stresses that individuals can make a difference through personal pledges, statements of commitment, and by taking action to reverse the epidemic. Added together, these individual commitments can also make governments realise that *all* people care about AIDS, want to be part of an effective response to it and are willing to make their own commitments. Individuals from all over the world are already meeting the individual commitment challenge:

“I promise to play a positive role in spreading the word in combating HIV/AIDS. Preventing this epidemic from spreading should be our top priority. HIV/AIDS is not curable and with the number of babies, children and adults contracting HIV/AIDS everyday, it is essential that we take drastic steps to counter this epidemic.” - Pakistan

“I promise I will ensure to educate and create awareness among people on HIV/AIDS/STI transmission and prevention”. - India

“I promise to protect myself as well as my family from any behaviour that potentially risks bringing HIV infection. I also promise to use the knowledge I have to educate others to do the same, especially by talking to young people and advising them to protect themselves and others whenever I can”. - Tanzania

As UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, put it so aptly at the 2001 UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, “All of us must recognize AIDS as our problem. All of us must make it our priority.”