

UNAIDS Praises Mandela's Bold Stance on HIV and AIDS

Geneva, 7 January 2005 – Nelson Mandela continues to be an icon in the struggle against HIV and AIDS through his unwavering and outspoken stance on stigma and discrimination towards those living with and affected by the epidemic.

“Mr Mandela’s public acknowledgement that his son Makgatho Mandela, had died from an AIDS-related illness is a demonstration of the practical leadership that Mr Mandela gives to the international efforts to fight stigma and discrimination”, said Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS.

Mr Mandela is one of the many southern African leaders, including his wife Graca Machel, former South African Home Affairs Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi and former Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda, who have openly acknowledged the impact of HIV and AIDS on their own families. The openness of these southern African leaders highlights that HIV and AIDS knows no boundaries, and that increasingly all people in this region of the world are being affected by the pandemic.

UNAIDS joins the rest of the world in conveying its deepest sympathies to Mr Mandela and his family during this time of grief.

For more information please contact Annemarie Hou, UNAIDS Geneva, Tel: +41 22 791 45 77, Email: houa@unaids.org or Richard Delate, UNAIDS Regional Support Team, Johannesburg, Tel: +27 11 517 1524, +27 82 370 2666, Email: delater@unaids.org.