LAUNCH OF 2003 AIDS EPIDEMIC UPDATE

UNAIDS AND WHO TO RELEASE NEW GLOBAL AIDS EPIDEMIC UPDATE REPORT FOR WORLD AIDS DAY

-- Number of People Living with HIV Hits New Peak Across Southern Africa --

Press Briefing, Monday, 24 November, 14.00-15.00

WHAT: Media briefing to present the new UNAIDS/WHO report, *AIDS Epidemic Update 2003*, to be released on Tuesday, 25 November, in advance of World AIDS Day (1 December). Participants will discuss key findings of the new report:

- Comprehensive new global and regional statistics for HIV/AIDS
- AIDS maintains stranglehold in sub-Saharan Africa
- Epidemic growing rapidly in many other regions, including Eastern Europe and Central Asia, driven by injection drug use and unsafe sex
- Most infected individuals have yet to become ill; urgent need to expand access to antiretroviral treatment
- Major new prevention efforts, including measures to address HIV stigma and discrimination, are needed to slow spread of HIV/AIDS

WHO: Speakers include:

- Marika Fahlen, Director, Social Mobilization and Information, UNAIDS
- Donald Sutherland, Coordinator, Surveillance, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation, WHO
- Catherine Hankins, Chief Scientific Adviser, UNAIDS

WHEN: Monday, 24 November 2003, 14.00-15.00

WHERE: Salle de Presse III, Palais des Nations

EMBARGO: Information from the *AIDS Epidemic Update 2003* is embargoed until 25 November at 14.00 GMT (Print journalists: This report may be used in newspapers on Wednesday 26 November)

CONTACTS: Dominique De Santis, UNAIDS, Geneva, tel. (41 22) 791 4509 or mobile (+41 79) 254 6803, or Anne Winter, UNAIDS, Geneva, tel. (+41 22) 791 4577.