

### **UNAIDS WELCOMES AUSTRALIA'S INCREASED FUNDING FOR AIDS**

**Bangkok, 12 July 2004** -- UNAIDS welcomes the announcement by the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, to more than double Australia's funding for AIDS from AUS\$ 250 million (US\$ 180 million) to AUS\$600 million (US\$ 435 million) by 2010. The announcement was made in tandem with the appointment of Australia's first Special Representative on HIV/AIDS.

"Australia is already a leading advocate in the fight against AIDS in Asia and the Pacific," said Dr Peter Piot, Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. "This additional contribution and the appointment of a high-level AIDS representative highlight not only the urgency of the response in the region but the strong commitment of the Australian government."

In addition, an extra AUS\$3 million will be used to support the Asia Pacific Leadership Forum on HIV/AIDS and Development, an Australian initiative spearheaded by UNAIDS.

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