



Press statement

UNAIDS AND WHO APPLAUD NEW CLINTON FOUNDATION INITIATIVES TO INCREASE ACCESS TO TREATMENT

Geneva, 11 April 2005 - The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization (WHO) applaud the announcement made today by the Clinton Foundation HIV/AIDS Initiative of two new programmes to help expand AIDS care and treatment to children and to people living in rural areas.

"These initiatives represent critical efforts to accelerate the delivery of antiretroviral treatment to populations who have limited access to these life-saving medicines. It is another demonstration of how, with determined leadership and commitment, we can begin to bridge the gap between the 700 000 people in low- and middle-income countries who are currently receiving AIDS treatment and the 6 million who need it," said Dr Peter Piot, UNAIDS Executive Director.

The Clinton Foundation's pediatric programme will help to spur widespread AIDS treatment for children in developing countries by supplying drugs at less than half of current market rates and by providing technical assistance to at least ten countries by the end of this year. Its goal of reaching at least 10 000 children with AIDS medicines by the end of 2005 is a significant step forward in highlighting and beginning to address the need for pediatric treatment.

"AIDS claimed the lives of 500 000 children in 2004 – one-sixth of overall annual deaths. Yet only 15 000 to 25 000 children living with HIV have access to life-saving antiretroviral treatment in developing countries. We must build on this initiative by the Clinton Foundation and expand the rapid scale-up of AIDS treatment, prevention and care," said Dr Jim Yong Kim, WHO Director of HIV/AIDS.

The second programme will provide treatment in rural areas of Mozambique, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania. It will also create models that can be replicated in other countries in Africa and Asia. The expertise and experience of Partners in Health, which has been a pioneer in the provision of AIDS services in Haiti, will be instrumental in this effort.

"There is a tendency to start programmes in large cities where most of the doctors are. This initiative is very important to enable equitable access to HIV/AIDS services in communities where the burden of the disease is much greater and more devastating," added Dr Kim.

Today's announcement by the Clinton Foundation marks another important milestone in the global movement to accelerate access to AIDS care and treatment worldwide.

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For more information, please contact Beth Magne-Watts, UNAIDS, Geneva, tel. +41 22 791 5074, wattsb@unaids.org. For more information about UNAIDS, please visit www.unaids.org.