

UNAIDS CALLS ON THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND TO PRIORITISE AIDS EPIDEMIC IN ZAMBIA

Geneva, 15 June 2004 – UNAIDS today calls on the International Monetary Fund to prioritise the impact of the AIDS epidemic and the need of the government of Zambia to invest in a sustained and urgent response, when reviewing the country's progress in meeting the conditions of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility agreed in April this year.

The AIDS epidemic is an unprecedented threat to human development and stability. In Zambia, 19 per cent of all adults are currently infected with HIV. The AIDS epidemic is also contributing to a devastating crisis in human capacity across many of the countries of Southern Africa, including Zambia. There is a desperate need now to increase the number of trained healthcare professionals and other key public sector workers in Zambia and other countries in the region to mount an effective HIV prevention and care strategy necessary to stem the devastating potential long-term impact of AIDS on Zambia's society and economy.

An exceptional problem, such as the AIDS epidemic in Zambia, demands a no less exceptional response, particularly in relation to financing. Regular development funding is not enough to support the urgent and sustained response needed to respond to the epidemic.

For more information, please contact Dominique De Santis, UNAIDS, Geneva, (+41 22) 791 4509. You may also visit our website, www.unaids.org, for more information about the programme.