



HIV and AIDS Campaign **ACTION ALERT** 24 September 2004

Issued jointly by the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance and UNAIDS

Start planning now for World AIDS Day 2004 !

World AIDS Day, which falls on a Wednesday (1 December) this year, is a unique moment when all of humanity is challenged to reflect on the way that HIV and AIDS affects us and how we can respond to the pandemic. You have an important part to play on that day through planning or participating in events at your church, your school, and in your community.

World AIDS Day 2004 will focus on **Women, Girls, HIV and AIDS** — the theme for the World AIDS Campaign 2004. Through its focus on women and girls, the year-long campaign aims to accelerate the global response to HIV and AIDS – preventing new infections, promoting equal access to treatment and mitigating the impact of AIDS.

Women, Girls, HIV and AIDS: The 2004 World AIDS Campaign urges everyone to learn and understand that the rise of the epidemic amongst women and girls is strongly related to gender inequalities in society. The struggle against the epidemic is the fight against fundamental social norms. World AIDS Day can be a good opportunity to learn more about HIV and AIDS in women's groups, Sunday School, youth groups, schools, and seminaries.

UNAIDS is developing **posters** with strong messages around the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV and AIDS and their role in the struggle against it. These will be posted on the UNAIDS Campaign web pages in English by the end of September, with other languages available in October. The UNAIDS campaign website also offers resources for campaigning around the theme at: http://www.unaids.org/wac2004/index_en.htm

Many new resources on Women, Girls and HIV and AIDS can be found at:
http://www.e-alliance.ch/wad_resources.jsp

Make a difference! Let the community organizations and politicians hear your voice, and let people living with HIV and AIDS feel your solidarity. Start planning now!

What can I do to make a difference?

There are many ways in which you can participate individually and as a church or community in World AIDS Day 2004.

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Worship and prayer: Your church, youth group, women's group, prayer circle, club or school are encouraged to join people all over the world in prayer to observe World AIDS Day. Plan a special order of worship on World AIDS Day or the weekend before or after. An ecumenical liturgy, "Access for All: Listen to the Voice of Women" can be used or adapted. This liturgy, and other worship and theological study resources, can be found at: http://www.e-alliance.ch/wad_resources.jsp.

Action: Host your own event or take part in a local or national campaign. Visit political or community leaders and write articles for your local newspaper. Many suggestions, with resources, are available at <http://www.e-alliance.ch/wad.jsp>

Learn more, and commit yourself, your church and community to "the next steps":
An easy to use four-page brochure **The Next Steps: For positive change in attitudes that cause HIV and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination** has been designed for local parish use. The Next Steps brochure is available in English, French and Spanish on-line or you may request free printed copies by e-mail to nextsteps@e-alliance.ch, indicating the language needed and your mailing address.

The **Signs of Hope – Steps for Change** CD-ROM is available on-line or a free copy can be requested by e-mail. The CD includes more than 90 poster images from around the world that you can print or use in bulletins and newsletters, but just as importantly contains more than 100 multilingual resources for study, worship, learning, workshops and more.

Both resources can be found on-line at http://www.e-alliance.ch/wad_resources.jsp

For more information on World AIDS Day and what you can do, see:

UNAIDS campaign webpage: <http://www.unaids.org/en/events/campaigns.asp>

Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance: <http://www.e-alliance.ch/wad.jsp>

For past Action Alerts and Bulletins from the HIV and AIDS Campaign of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, see <http://www.e-alliance.ch/newsletters.jsp>

The **Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance** is a broad international network of churches and Christian organizations cooperating in advocacy on global trade and HIV and AIDS. The Alliance is based in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, see www.e-alliance.ch.

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, **UNAIDS**, is the main advocate for global action on the epidemic. UNAIDS offers technical assistance on HIV and AIDS issues to all faith-based communities to strengthen the global response to the pandemic. www.unaids.org