

Press release

African music star Toumani Diabaté appointed as UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador

Geneva, 12 December 2008 – African musician Toumani Diabaté from Mali has been appointed as a Goodwill Ambassador for the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to raise awareness on AIDS issues. Toumani Diabaté descends from a long line of oral historians and praise singers. He has blended this ancient West African music tradition with other modern and traditional music from across the world. In addition, he has been instrumental in introducing the *Kora*, a 21-string harp lute, to audiences around the world and in developing the *Kora* into a solo concert instrument.

“Mr Toumani Diabate will be a role model for helping to reduce stigma and discrimination faced by people living with HIV,” said UNAIDS Executive Director Dr Peter Piot. “As a UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador, his voice will also raise awareness on the impact of AIDS on individuals and their families.”

As an international acclaimed musician and AIDS advocate, Toumani Diabaté, with his outreach and dedication, will help UNAIDS move forward the AIDS response. Today, he uses his music to empower people and spread awareness messages. Mr. Diabaté has already participated in various outreach campaigns with the Haut Conseil National de Lutte contre le Sida in Mali.

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Global Facts and figures on AIDS

- An estimated 33.0 million [30.3 – 36.1 million] people living with HIV worldwide
- 2.7 million [2.2 million to 3.2 million] people newly infected in 2007
- 2.0 million [1.8 million – 2.3 million] people died of AIDS in 2007

UNAIDS is an innovative joint venture of the United Nations, bringing together the efforts and resources of the UNAIDS Secretariat and ten UN system organizations in the AIDS response. The Secretariat headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland—with staff on the ground in more than 80 countries. Coherent action on AIDS by the UN system is coordinated in countries through UN theme groups, and joint programmes on AIDS. UNAIDS’ Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Visit the UNAIDS Web site at www.unaids.org