

Reduction of prices of second line antiretroviral drugs for AIDS will save lives

GENEVA, 6 August 2009 – UNAIDS welcomes the two separate price reduction agreements reached by the Clinton Foundation with pharmaceutical companies Pfizer and Matrix to improve access to AIDS and Tuberculosis (TB) medicines for people in need of second line treatment. These medicines are required when people living with HIV fail to respond to standard treatment regimens. At the end of 2008, an estimated 5% of the people on antiretroviral treatment required second line drugs. The need for these drugs is expected to rise in the coming years.

“The reduction of prices of second line antiretroviral drugs will save lives,” said UNAIDS executive director Mr Michel Sidibé. “These agreements will help improve the sustainability of national treatment programmes over the long term”.

The agreement with Matrix to make available three second line drugs in a single package will also contribute to the ease of delivery and help increase treatment adherence.

Tuberculosis remains one of the leading causes of AIDS-related deaths. The agreement with Pfizer allows people to seek TB treatment without interrupting their second line treatment. “People living with HIV should not have to choose between TB and AIDS treatment,” said Mr Sidibé. “We have to stop people living with HIV from dying of TB”.

There are an estimated 33 million people living with HIV. About 4 million people are currently on antiretroviral treatment. UNAIDS along with its Cosponsors WHO and UNICEF are supporting countries reach their universal access targets for treatment.

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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. The Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Contributing to achieving global commitments to universal access to comprehensive interventions for HIV prevention, treatment, care and support is the number one priority for UNAIDS. Visit the UNAIDS website at www.unaids.org