

UNAIDS launches 'red card' campaign against HIV

New global initiative at the FIFA World Cup shines spotlight on the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV

JOHANNESBURG, 12 June 2010 — A new campaign is using the power and outreach of football to unite the world around a common cause—preventing the transmission of HIV from mother to child. Launched today in South Africa by the UNAIDS Executive Director, Michel Sidibé, international musician Akon, UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador and producer of the World Cup opening ceremony, Lebo M, UNAIDS National Goodwill Ambassador, Jimmie Earl Perry, and Kirsten Nematandani, President of the South African Football Association. The campaign aims to ensure an HIV-free generation by the 2014 FIFA World Cup to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Each year, an estimated 430 000 babies are born with HIV globally, the large majority in Africa. Over the course of a 90-minute football match, nearly 80 babies will become newly infected with HIV. In many parts of Africa, AIDS-related illness is the leading cause of death among infants and young children.

Through the campaign—backed by international football stars and UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassadors Michael Ballack of Germany and Emmanuel Adebayor of Togo—captains of 32 World Cup qualifying teams have been invited to sign the appeal: “From Soweto to Rio de Janeiro, give AIDS the red card and prevent babies from becoming infected with HIV.” Nineteen captains have already signed on, including host country South Africa and defending champion Italy.

“By the next football World Cup we can virtually eliminate HIV transmission to babies,” said UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé who attended the campaign launch in South Africa. “Let us give AIDS the red card permanently.”

The lives of mothers and their babies can be saved through a combination of HIV testing and counselling, access to effective antiretroviral prophylaxis and treatment, safer delivery practices, family planning, and counselling and support for optimal infant feeding practices.

An estimated 33.4 million people are living with HIV worldwide. Since 2001, there has been a 17% reduction in new HIV infections globally. However, for every two people who access antiretroviral treatment, five more become newly infected with HIV.

Contact:

UNAIDS New York | Richard Leonard | +1 646 666 8003 | LeonardR@unaid.org

UNAIDS South Africa | Sheba Okwenje | +127 11 517 1634 | okwenjeb@unaid.org

UNAIDS

Leveraging the AIDS response, UNAIDS works to build political action and to promote the rights all of people for better results for global health and development. Globally, it sets policy and is the source of HIV-related data. In countries, UNAIDS brings together the resources of the UNAIDS Secretariat and 10 UN system organizations for coordinated and accountable efforts to unite the world against AIDS.
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