

UNAIDS welcomes creation of new UN Women's agency

GENEVA, 16 September 2009 – UNAIDS welcomes the adoption of a resolution by the 63rd General Assembly of the United Nations calling for the creation of a new UN agency on women.

“This is a historic opportunity to advance the rights of women and girls,” said UNAIDS’ executive director Mr. Michel Sidibé. “UNAIDS will work closely with the new agency to promote women’s access to health and development.”

Women are disproportionately affected by the AIDS epidemic. More than 60% of people living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa are women and three out of four young people living with HIV are female. Gender inequalities, sexual abuse, violence, conflict and poverty often increase women’s vulnerability to HIV. In Asia nearly 50 million women are at risk of becoming infected with HIV from their intimate partners.

Protecting women from becoming infected with HIV and treating women living with HIV can turn back the epidemic. Stopping women from becoming infected and increasing their access to treatment also directly contributes to reducing the number of children being born with HIV and becoming orphans.

Working alongside the new agency, the UNAIDS Secretariat, along with its Cosponsors will support in strengthening the capacity of women’s organizations to deliver critical maternal and child health services to women and girls at grassroots level. It will also leverage the AIDS response as an opportunity to stop violence against women and girls in all settings.

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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