

Statement

UNAIDS mourns death of leading AIDS activist Arnaud Marty-Lavauzelle

Geneva, 16 February 2007 – It is with great sadness that UNAIDS has learnt of the death of Arnaud Marty-Lavauzelle. Arnaud died on 13 February in Paris at the age of 61.

For more than two decades Arnaud was a tireless advocate for AIDS, earning the respect and admiration of colleagues worldwide. Not only fighting for a better and more equitable world for those living with HIV, Arnaud was himself HIV-positive and in the early days of the epidemic he emerged as an important spokesperson for people living with HIV, both in France and globally.

Always outspoken and refusing to remain passive in the face of both the epidemic and his own illness, he preferred to act and to urge others to action. In 1987 he joined AIDES, the largest French non-governmental organization working on HIV. He became President in 1991, a position he remained in for eight years. In 1994 he was one of the founding members of SIDACTION where he also became a member of the Board of Directors. At SIDACTION he worked, among other things, on access to care and treatment – including for those in the South.

In 1995 Arnaud was one of the first members of the newly formed UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB), representing European non-governmental organisations—a role which he played with great effect—focusing other PCB colleagues on the need to address stigma and ensure treatment and care for people living with HIV.

“Arnaud was a bold and determined pioneer in the AIDS response and played a vital role in our history,” said Dr Peter Piot, Executive Director, UNAIDS. “We will stand by his belief that if someone does not speak often about their dreams they will not become reality. I will miss him dearly.”

Contact

Sophie Barton-Knott | UNAIDS Geneva | +41 22 791 1697 | bartonknotts@unaids.org

#

UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, brings together the efforts and resources of ten UN system organizations to the global AIDS response. Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Based in Geneva, the UNAIDS secretariat works on the ground in more than 80 countries world wide. Visit the UNAIDS Web site at www.unaids.org