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UN Foundation Announces Partnership with Netherlands Embassy in New Delhi

Grant to Support UNAIDS Efforts in India

(For Immediate Release)

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Washington, DC – In response to the need for increased resources and investments in HIV/AIDS prevention, the United Nations Foundation announced a new partnership with the Netherlands Embassy in New Delhi and the UN Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to fight the pandemic in India. The “Coordinated HIV/AIDS/STD Response through Capacity-Building and Awareness” project, or CHARCA, will receive a multi-year, \$2.8 million grant from the United Nations Foundation with a \$2.8 million matching contribution from the Netherlands to reduce the risk of HIV infection among the most vulnerable Indian populations, particularly adolescent girls.

“This project serves as a model for the new public-private partnerships -- between NGOs, governments and the UN system -- that are needed to meet the world’s biggest challenges,” said Timothy E. Wirth, President of the UN Foundation. “Currently, India is spending more than \$250 million to combat HIV/AIDS over the next few years. Given the growing magnitude of the problem in India, additional resources are needed to make a real difference. We are pleased to partner with the Netherlands Embassy on this project, and welcome others to join in the UN-led fight against HIV/AIDS.”

Mr. P. Koch, the Netherlands Ambassador in New Delhi said, "Combating HIV/AIDS has been set as a priority in the Dutch development policy and my Embassy is committed to put this priority into practice. The CHARCA project will make use of existing institutions and work with several UN agencies with a focus on young women. In this way the CHARCA project will contribute substantially to effectively combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic in India."

The CHARCA project is part of UNAIDS’ Partnership Menus Initiative, developed in collaboration with the UN Foundation and the World Economic Forum to serve as an advocacy and fundraising tool to engage the private sector and other global actors in addressing the HIV/AIDS challenge. The partnership menu model is currently operational for UNAIDS projects in India, Brazil and Zambia, and will expand to other regions this year.

"We welcome the financial contribution made by the United Nations Foundation and the Netherlands Embassy to reduce the spread of HIV among young women and girls in India," said Peter Piot, UNAIDS Executive Director. "Given that gender inequalities are a major driving force behind the AIDS epidemic, investing in prevention programmes for young women will not only empower them to make more informed decisions about their sexual relations and protect themselves against HIV, but will help stem the AIDS epidemic in India."

According to government figures, 3.86 million people are infected with HIV throughout India, with women constituting 21% of reported HIV/AIDS cases in the country. Because girls and women are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS for a number of social, cultural and economic reasons, the CHARCA project will work in six districts throughout India to reduce their risk of HIV infection. The selected districts are Guntur, Kishanganj, Bellary, Aizwal, Jaipur and Kanpur Nagar.

The CHARCA project will focus on women ranging in age from 13-25, and will reach girls and women in both urban and rural settings. Project objectives include: raising girls’ and women’s awareness of their reproductive health and rights; empowering girls and women to negotiate sexual relations and to protect themselves against unwanted and unsafe sexual encounters; increasing access to and improving the quality of reproductive health services and information; and creating an enabling environment to foster equality and ensure justice for women and girls.

An investment of only US \$50,000 could help CHARCA project implementers reach 10,000 young Indian women with the information and services needed to protect themselves from HIV infection

The UN Foundation, which was established to oversee administration of businessman and philanthropist R.E. Turner's historic gift in support of the United Nations and its causes, has awarded more than \$446 million for UN projects to date.

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To learn more about the CHARCA project, or UNAIDS' Partnership Menus, visit the UNAIDS website at www.unaids.org, or call the Development Office of the United Nations Foundation at 202-887-9040.