



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union to South Africa

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Press Release

.../ for immediate release

World AIDS Day 2009 – European Commission tops €1 billion invested in the fight against the global AIDS epidemic

On World AIDS Day 2009, the European Commission can announce that it has invested over €1bn in the fight against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. As a founding member of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the European Commission has to date pledged €1,072.5 mil covering the period 2002-2010 and has recently made new policy commitments to do more, better, together. According to the latest figures, new HIV infections have been reduced by 17% over the past eight years and that the most progress is seen in sub-Saharan Africa. However worldwide, the number of people living with HIV now reaches 33 million, with the fastest spread of the epidemic occurring on the threshold of the European Union, in the neighbouring countries of Eastern Europe.

Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid Karel De Gucht said: "Despite recent hopeful trends, it is a fact that more than 2 million people die from AIDS every year, with 70% of these deaths occurring in sub-Saharan Africa. AIDS remains the most deadly virus of our time and the EU, as the biggest donor worldwide, is committed to do more in the fight against AIDS."

In South Africa, European Union Head of Delegation, Lodewijk Briët agrees: "Our commitment to tackle HIV/AIDS is unwavering – while the bulk of our current support to South Africa in this regard is dedicated to nationwide home-based care and student awareness initiatives, all our development partnerships in South Africa are required to take on board the fight. In fact, we envisage a major new partnership with South Africa, again focusing specifically on primary health care, in the years ahead. "

- In South Africa the European Commission funds the R500 mil (€45 mil) **Expanded Programme of Partnerships for the Delivery of Primary Health Care, HIV and AIDS Services** as well as the R224 mil (€20 mil) **HEAIDS** (higher education HIV/AIDS awareness) Programme.
- The EU Action Against AIDS Group, comprising ten EU Delegations in Southern Africa, operates a network and a regional HIV/AIDS helpdesk to share ideas and best practices as well as to develop a collective approach. It is committed to placing the fight against HIV/AIDS, specifically prevention, on the agenda of its interactions with host governments as well as its other interlocutors in the region.
- The European Commission increasingly channels its available funds through budget support to strengthen health systems as one of the main ways to confront AIDS. Budget support has increased from €1,425 mil for 2002-2006 to €2,571 mil for 2007-2011.
- European Union contributions to the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria have almost quadrupled: From \$403 mil in 2003 to \$1,546 mil, representing around 55% of world contributions in the years 2004-2008.

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Background: To date close to 60 million people have been infected with HIV and 25 million people have died of AIDS related causes. Although important progress has been achieved in preventing new HIV infections and in lowering the annual number of AIDS-related deaths, AIDS continues to be a major global health priority. The number of people living with HIV worldwide continued to grow in 2008, reaching a total of 33.4 million. In 2008, 2.7 million people became newly infected, and some 2 million people died from AIDS-related causes.

The epidemic appears to have stabilized in most regions, although prevalence continues to increase in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and in other parts of Asia due to a high rate of new infections. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most heavily affected region, accounting for 71% of all new HIV infections in 2008. 14.1 million children in sub-Saharan Africa have lost one or both parents to AIDS, and AIDS remains the top killer in the region.