

Press Release

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WORLD AIDS CAMPAIGN 2007 CALLS FOR LEADERSHIP IN ALL LEVELS

Hanoi, November 14, 2007 The World AIDS Campaign activities for Viet Nam were launched by the Ministry of Health of Viet Nam and UNAIDS on Wednesday in Hanoi. The campaign will run from 10 November to 10 December and entails activities and events ranging from workshops to TV-galas. The campaign month takes place around the World AIDS Day, commemorated each year on 1 December.

Years 2007 and 2008 the campaign focuses on leadership. The theme is illustrated by the slogan, "Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise." The sub-slogan for this year is "Take the lead". In designating leadership as the World AIDS Day theme for the next two years, the World AIDS Campaign is highlighting both the political leadership needed to fulfill commitments that have been made in the response to HIV and AIDS and celebrating the leadership that has been witnessed at all levels of society.

"It's not just presidents and prime ministers who lead. We must draw more on other sources of social power rooted in civil society, particularly among people living with HIV – and encourage greater leadership among youth and women's movements, churches, business groups, trade unions, and local communities," said UNAIDS Executive Director **Peter Piot**, underlining the fact that leadership can and should take many forms.

Leadership requires willingness to take concrete steps towards addressing stigma and discrimination and support for innovative actions. This year Viet Nam is giving out Innovation Day awards to support civil society leadership initiatives in HIV prevention. Another concrete example of leadership is the recent workshop on Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV (GIPA) co-chaired by the President of Vietnam Women's Union, Director General of the VAAC, representative of people living with HIV and Chair of the Joint UN.Team on HIV. At the meeting "Call to Action for the Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV" was launched. The call highlights more practical actions that can be undertaken to achieve meaningful participation.

"It is clear to us all that the personal, brave actions of people living with HIV have had a powerful impact on the ignorance about HIV, and on the HIV-related stigma and discrimination that are so toxic to society and individuals. Greater involvement of people living with HIV must continue to be our collective goal and we must seize all opportunities to translate the Call for Action into reality," said **Eamonn Murphy**, UNAIDS Country Director.

Strong leadership on HIV requires visible personal commitment also from political leaders. There is strong support from high-level officials in the Communist Party, the National Assembly and the Government to move towards universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010. Most recently, the Deputy Prime Minister Truong Vinh Trong chairing two key national conferences on Harm Reduction in 2007 has highlighted the importance of the HIV response to nation's development.

Resources attached:

- World AIDS Day Fact Sheet for the Media
- Fact Sheet on Universal Access

For information regarding the events taking place during the World AIDS Campaign month, please refer to UNAIDS website: www.unaids.org.vn/

For more information or to arrange interviews please contact UNAIDS Communications Officer Riikka Lamminmaki: +84 4 734 2824 ext. 107, LamminmakiR@unaids.org

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