

MEDIA RELEASE

A global campaign to prevent new HIV infections and help children affected by HIV/AIDS launched today

HIV/AIDS is now a children's disease, robbing tens of millions of their futures. Although most people living with HIV are adults, children under five account for one in six global AIDS-related deaths, and one in seven new global infections. As we enter the third decade of the epidemic, a child dies of an AIDS-related illness every minute of every day, and a young person contracts HIV every 15 seconds.

Jakarta, 25 October 2005

UNICEF and partners launched a new global campaign today – **UNITE FOR CHILDREN. UNITE AGAINST AIDS**. The campaign will focus on scaling up interventions to prevent new infections, help children affected by HIV/AIDS, and ensure children have a central place on the global HIV/AIDS agenda.

“Unite for Children, Unite Against AIDS” campaign aims to bring about a seismic shift in the understanding of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, that it increasingly affects children. The campaign will bring together partners from within the UN system, governments, civil society, sports organizations and the corporate sector to achieve tangible progress for children affected by the pandemic.

Over the next five years the campaign aims to mobilize action and resources to drastically reduce primary infections; scale up interventions for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT); make paediatric AIDS drugs available to children; and provide care, support and protection for children affected by HIV/AIDS.

HIV/AIDS is threatening children as never before. Every day in the world, over 5,000 young people aged 15-24 are newly infected with HIV, and 1,400 children under 15 die of AIDS-related illness. 15 million children have lost one or both parents due to AIDS. And yet, the overwhelming majority of adolescents and young people do not know how to avoid the disease, irrespective of whether they are in the high-prevalence countries of sub-Saharan Africa or in the other regions where the epidemic is taking root and spreading.

In Indonesia, the Government estimates that 90,000 – 130,000 Indonesians are living with HIV infection, majority of whom are unaware of their sero-positive status (2002). As of September 2005, Communicable Disease Control & Environment Health, Ministry of Health reported cumulative of 8,251 HIV/AIDS cases of which 4,065 were HIV in 32 provinces and 4,186 AIDS cases in 31 provinces. Of the reported cumulative AIDS cases, the highest percentage (59.04 %) is found in the 20-29 year age group. Under 14 years account for 2.12 %. Among reported cumulative AIDS cases, injecting drug use accounts for 59.9 %, heterosexual intercourse for 47.8 % and others 7.7 %. The national AIDS case rate per 100,000 of the populations is 2.08.

Reported cases are probably much less than the real numbers, so strengthening surveillance systems at every level of administration will be crucial.

MEDIA RELEASE

Trends indicate that Indonesia is at risk from an epidemic on a much larger scale in the near future. The alarming rise in HIV infection in high-risk groups in several parts of the country is one indication of the sharp increases to come. It is estimated that by 2010, there will be approximately 110,000 people suffering from AIDS or who have died because of AIDS, and one million more who are HIV-infected.

“Knowledge of HIV/AIDS among the general population in Indonesia is still low, especially among youth, the group most vulnerable,” Dr. Gianfranco Rotigliano, UNICEF Representative in Indonesia stated.

In 2002-2003, the Indonesia Demographic Health Survey found that around 34 percent of young women and 21 percent of young men in the 15-24 years age group had never heard of HIV/AIDS. “In absolute numbers, this translates into millions of young people,” said Dr. Rotigliano.

Reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS is a major organizational priority for the United Nations and its agencies, as expressed in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. This issue is also linked to the potential achievement of the other MDGs: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal basic education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and ensuring environmental sustainability.

For more information, please contact:

UNICEF’s Fighting HIV/AIDS Project Officers: Rachel Odede on (021) 570 5816 ext. 449, 0812 1034 38, and Gelora Manurung on (021) 570 5816 ext. 443, 0815 9028 104