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CAMPAIGN TO END PEDIATRIC AIDS LAUNCHED IN SIX AFRICAN COUNTRIES

“We are facing a potential human and economic devastation of the African continent’s future generations,” says Mrs. Graça Machel.

Johannesburg, South Africa (22 October 2009) – At a press conference held today in Johannesburg, South Africa, **Mrs. Graça Machel** announced the launch of the Campaign to End Pediatric HIV/AIDS (CEPA). The campaign will mobilize the political will and financial resources needed to overcome bottlenecks to scaling up pediatric HIV diagnosis, treatment, and care programs, initially in six sub-Saharan African nations.

“On the continent we are facing a potential human, social, and economic devastation of Africa’s future generations as a consequence of the impact of HIV and AIDS on our children,” said **Mrs. Machel**, who will chair the campaign’s pan-African **Leadership Council**. “We must hold our governments accountable to the promises they made to children; they must put systems in place to implement these promises; they must create good public policies and do all in their power to end pediatric HIV and AIDS on our continent,” she said.

The campaign’s ultimate goal is to overcome implementation and policy bottlenecks to increasing coverage rates for prevention of mother-to-child transmission and pediatric treatment services from the current average of 30 to 40 percent to the globally agreed-upon target of 80 percent. **Implementation bottlenecks** include inadequate health care worker training, and insufficient transportation systems for health care commodities; **policy bottlenecks** include lack of long-term predictable financing, and the lack of clear national policies and targets for scaling up access to pediatric HIV/AIDS services.

CEPA will operate initially in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria, Zambia, and Mozambique, and over time will be expanded to include other countries and regions of the world.

“Our strategy is to engage countries at two different stages of scaling up pediatric and family HIV/AIDS services: ‘tipping point countries’ where scale-up of pediatric HIV/AIDS services is well under way (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania) and ‘transition countries’ that are earlier in the process of scaling up pediatric HIV/AIDS services (Nigeria, Zambia, Mozambique),” said **Dr. Paul Zeitz**, executive director of the Global AIDS Alliance, which is providing financial and technical resources to civil society organizations in the six focus countries. “The campaign will facilitate the cross-pollination of best practices and exchanges of ideas and knowledge among in-country partners, among countries at different stages of the pediatric HIV epidemic, and through local-to-global partnerships,” he said.

Local-to-global partnerships are a distinctive feature of the campaign. “Under this model, CEPA partners will work through a network approach with groups in the focus countries to achieve campaign goals and ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of progress,” said Zeitz.

“CEPA’s advocacy approach is to target key decision-makers and others who can create and influence evidence-based policies and funding, and implement programs to prevent and treat pediatric HIV/AIDS; we will hold them accountable for concrete results,” said **Ms. Rolake Odetoyinbo**, Project Director of Nigeria’s Positive Action for Treatment Access group. “CEPA’s advocacy targets include the World Health Organization; UNICEF; UNAIDS; UNITAID; the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; G-8 and G-20 countries; and governments in the six focus countries.”

Campaign partners in each of the six focus countries are currently launching National Advocacy Action Plans for 2010 that have been developed in each country over the past three months through a broad-based process of collaboration and consultation among civil society organizations. “The National Advocacy Action Plans in each of the six countries call for responses to the highest-priority needs of our countries,” said **Mr. Felix Mwanza**, of the Treatment Advocacy & Literacy Campaign of Zambia (TALC). “We are bringing together the right people at the right time to give a boost to the continent’s pediatric HIV/AIDS prevention programs,” he said.

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