

Press statement

UNAIDS WELCOMES PROPOSAL TO LIFT SHORT TERM TRAVEL RESTRICTION TO UNITED STATES FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV.

Geneva, 1 December 2006 The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) welcomes the new proposal by President George Bush for a permanent waiver enabling people living with HIV to enter the United States on a short term basis.

A 1993 law prohibits HIV-positive people from receiving visas to visit the U.S. without a waiver. To help reduce stigma and discrimination, a permanent categorical waiver should enable HIV-positive people to enter the U.S. for short visits without applying for individual waivers or being asked to disclose their HIV status.

"UNAIDS applauds the Bush Administration for taking action to remove the restrictions on people living with HIV seeking to visit the United States," said UNAIDS Executive Director Dr Peter Piot. "This outdated policy has fostered stigma and discrimination and today's announcement is an encouraging step forward. UNAIDS looks forward to working with the US Congress and Administration in continuing this important work. While we all must remain firmly committed to stopping the spread of HIV, it is proven prevention strategies and behavior change, not travel restrictions that will turn the tide," he said.

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