

## Note to broadcasters

*Embargoed until Monday 12 February 2007 at 12:00 GMT*

### **Michael Ballack – one of the world's most popular footballers - launches new UNAIDS public service announcement**

*Be smart – protect yourself”- The German football star and UNAIDS Special Representative Michael Ballack speaks out on HIV prevention by featuring in new public service announcement (PSA) on AIDS that urges young people to make smart choices.*

He's known and loved across the world for his footballing skills. Now Michael Ballack—Special Representative for the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)—is going for goal by reaching out to young people and the world of sports in a new UNAIDS PSA about making the smart choices to help prevent the spread of HIV.

Michael Ballack is captain of the German football team and plays for top English football club Chelsea FC. One of the most popular football players in the world, he is a role model for many young people across the world and has been working with UNAIDS as a Special Representative since May 2006 to raise awareness on AIDS issues.

"AIDS is everybody's business. I think football is the most popular sport in the world. A lot of people know footballers, they look up to us, and I think we should all fight AIDS together," said Michael Ballack while shooting the short film.

The PSA is set in Ballack's familiar settings—the football pitch—and the script, tailored to a young audience, plays on sporting metaphors in both language and action:

**On the pitch you can play hard and take risks to score**

**But with HIV you are playing with your life**

**Be smart – protect yourself**

The key messages are universal and target young people:

- **Be smart** – because making the right choices makes the difference
- **Protect yourself** – because HIV prevention works

During the video, Ballack delivers the key HIV prevention messages while displaying his footballing skills on the pitch. AIDS statistics are shown on the stadium's big screen: 'During the course of a 90 minute football match more than 500 people will have died of AIDS, 180 under 25 years old.' After reading the statistics, Ballack switches from player to referee: blowing his whistle, shaking his head and rather than holding out a red card he holds up a red condom. This epidemic must stop and there is one very simple way – HIV prevention!

Also available for broadcast is a four-minute video news release which includes the PSA as well as interviews with Michael Ballack and AIDS experts.

UNAIDS Partnership Adviser Kate Thomson, who is openly living with HIV, also features in the video news release, she said, "People need to speak openly about sex and about how to protect themselves against HIV. Michael's a big star in the football world and there a lot of people who look up to and respect him. If Michael is talking openly about AIDS then I'm sure that will encourage them to do the same."

AIDS specialist Dr. Mark Nelson, Director of HIV services from the Chelsea and Westminster NHS trust tells how he wishes more stars would get involved in the AIDS response: "It is a fantastic thing that Ballack is doing this - his bravery - to come out and speak openly about this. Famous people can really have a massive effect on this epidemic."

According to latest UNAIDS figures, there were nearly 40 million people living with HIV in 2006 and over 4 million new HIV infections. Sport plays an important role in empowering young people and is a key arena for raising awareness on AIDS. Sports stars can have an important role in the response to AIDS by talking openly with young people about HIV prevention.

The UNAIDS Special Representative Programme engages prominent individuals from the world of art, science, literature, entertainment, sport and other fields of public life who have expressed their desire to contribute to UNAIDS and to move the AIDS response forward.

### **How to access the PSA**

- "For broadcast-standard video supporting this press release, please visit [www.thenewsmarket.com/un aids](http://www.thenewsmarket.com/un aids). If you are a first-time user, please take a moment to register. In case you have any questions, please email [journalisthelp@thenewsmarket.com](mailto:journalisthelp@thenewsmarket.com)". Note: The PSA is embargoed until Monday 12 February 2007 at 12:00 GMT

### **PSA rights information**

- The PSA is available in English and German rights free for international broadcast. Please accompany with an opening "Pictures from/courtesy of Al Jazeera" strap/aston.
- The music is cleared worldwide – please make sure to pass on the music information supplied to your local performing rights society. Musical composition: Fat Henry (Terry Devine-King) ANW 1130/3
- A video news release featuring the PSA in English and interviews with Ballack and AIDS specialists is also available for international broadcast (please acknowledge images courtesy Al Jazeera/Music "Fat Henry"(Terry Devine-King) ANW 1130/3)

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**UNAIDS**, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, brings together the efforts and resources of ten UN system organizations to the global AIDS response. Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Based in Geneva, the UNAIDS Secretariat works on the ground in more than 80 countries world wide. Visit the UNAIDS web site at [www.un aids.org](http://www.un aids.org)