

## Statement

### **UNAIDS acknowledges the health and human rights legacy of Jonathan Mann on the tenth anniversary of his death**

**Geneva, 2 September 2008** – UNAIDS today acknowledges the life and legacy of Dr Jonathan Mann, a formative force in the fields of HIV, health and human rights. Dr Mann and his wife, AIDS researcher Mary-Lou Clements-Mann were on their way to Geneva when their plane crashed off the coast of Nova Scotia, Canada on 2 September 1998.

Dr Mann was a visionary physician, advocate and scientist who highlighted the critical links between human rights and public health. Dr Mann championed the right of people living with HIV to participate in shaping the programmes that will make a difference in their own lives and the AIDS response. He actively engaged political leaders to implement rights-based approaches to HIV, including involving those affected as equal partners.

The enduring relevance of Dr Mann's work is clear—the protection and promotion of human rights is needed now more than ever in the response to AIDS. Stigma and discrimination remain major barriers to achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Gender-based violence puts women and girls at risk of HIV infection. Punitive laws keep sex workers, men who have sex with men, people who use drugs and other key populations from accessing the HIV-related programmes and services they need.

At the recent International AIDS Conference in Mexico City, human rights activists presented UNAIDS' Executive Director with a copy of the declaration *Human Rights and HIV/AIDS: Now More than Ever*, signed onto by some 600 civil society organizations. Dr Peter Piot promised continued support to national programmes that will address the intersections of HIV and human rights.

UNAIDS staff in Geneva observed a moment of silence yesterday during their general staff meeting in memory of Jonathan Mann. A public event to celebrate his life and legacy will be held on 25 November, timed to coincide with the ninth meeting of the UNAIDS Reference Group on HIV and Human Rights.

#### **Contact UNAIDS:**

Edward Mishaud | Tel. +41 22 791 5587 | [mishaude@unaids.org](mailto:mishaude@unaids.org)

UNAIDS is an innovative joint venture of the United Nations, bringing together the efforts and resources of the UNAIDS Secretariat and ten UN system organizations in the AIDS response. The Secretariat headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland—with staff on the ground in more than 80 countries. Coherent action on AIDS by the UN system is coordinated in countries through UN theme groups, and joint programmes on AIDS. UNAIDS' Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Visit the UNAIDS Web site at [www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org)