

Press release

H.R.H. Crown Princess of Norway accepts appointment as UNAIDS Special Representative

Geneva, 11 April 2006 – Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Mette-Marit of Norway has accepted her appointment of Special Representative for the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

The Crown Princess is committed to actively supporting the AIDS response. As Special Representative, she is planning to generate more attention and support for young people living with and affected by HIV. She also plans to raise awareness on the stigma surrounding people living with HIV.

“I am delighted to appoint Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Mette-Marit as UNAIDS Special Representative,” said Dr Peter Piot, UNAIDS Executive Director. “I am confident that she will make a difference in the fight against AIDS as a strong advocate for young people, who continue to be on the frontlines of the AIDS epidemic.”

The Crown Princess will visit the UNAIDS Secretariat in Geneva on 25 April 2006 to learn more about the work of UNAIDS and meet its Executive Director, Dr Peter Piot. During her visit, she will meet with UNAIDS officials and representatives from the UN Positive Staff Group, a recently formed group of people living with HIV working at the United Nations.

Her Royal Highness the Crown Princess has been engaged in AIDS issues for some time. Her studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London and her work with the Norwegian Agency for Development in 2003 raised her interest and concern in AIDS issues. In January 2005, the Crown Princess carried out a study trip to Malawi focusing on AIDS.

According to UNAIDS, the global AIDS epidemic is one of the worst crises affecting the world today. It is likely to have the most severe impact on children and young people. Globally, around one quarter of the 40 million people living with HIV are under 25 years of age. Young people, between the ages 15 to 24, make up about half of new HIV infections worldwide. In 2005 alone, 5 million people became infected.

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