

## Press release

### **An Evening of Remembrance and Hope: Uniting the World Against AIDS**

#### ***UN Secretary-General, internationally renowned performers, activists join UNAIDS at the United Nations to remember 25 years of AIDS***

(New York, 1 June 2006) – United Nation Secretary-General Kofi Annan, international actors and musicians, people living with HIV and long time AIDS activists, join the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Executive Director Dr. Peter Piot in an event entitled *An Evening of Remembrance and Hope: Uniting the World Against AIDS*.

The gathering, which will take place in the UN General Assembly Hall, coincides with the 2006 High Level Meeting on AIDS, bringing together more than a dozen Heads of State and Government, over 100 Ministers, and more than 1,000 civil society representatives from around the world.

“It is especially fitting that on the eve of this very important High Level Meeting, we gather to remember the 25 million people we have lost since this epidemic began, and commit ourselves to making their legacy our collective action,” said Dr. Piot, UNAIDS Executive Director.

Participating in the evening’s observances will be actors Richard Gere, Whoopi Goldberg, and Naomi Watts, as well as internationally renowned musicians Angelique Kidjo (Benin), Salman Ahmad (Pakistan), Wyclef Jean (Haiti), the African Children’s Choir (Uganda, Kenya) and Paul Winter (USA).

Also speaking during the evening will be people living with HIV and long-time AIDS activists and leaders from six continents, highlighting the vitally important leadership which has come from communities in the last 25 years of living with AIDS.

“The voices of those of us living with AIDS are central to any effective response,” said Mary Fisher, a woman living with AIDS from the United States and UNAIDS Special Representative who will speak during the evening. “Tonight,” added Fisher, “world and community leaders will hear these voices above all others – and they will speak a message of power and hope.”

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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 75 countries world wide.

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