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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **World Bank Seeks Innovative Ideas to Fight HIV and AIDS Stigma and Discrimination in South Asia**

**WASHINGTON, DC, November 26, 2007** — The World Bank with United Nations and private sector partners today launched a competitive Development Marketplace aimed at identifying and funding innovative approaches to reduce stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS in the South Asia region, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

Titled **“Tackling HIV and AIDS Stigma and Discrimination: From Insights to Action,”** the Development Marketplace competition is reaching out to communities across South Asia seeking proposals for local, small-scale projects with the potential to be scaled up and replicated. The winners will be selected by an international jury of World Bank and independent HIV and AIDS experts at the Development Marketplace event on May 15, 2008 in Mumbai, India.

*“Stigma and discrimination seriously undermines efforts to fight HIV and AIDS,”* said **Praful Patel, World Bank Vice President for the South Asia region.** *“It also marginalizes people at risk and living with the disease contributing further to their social isolation and rejection. This competition offers a unique opportunity to channel small grants directly to community organizations and NGOs to implement imaginative approaches that will help change the attitudes and practices that undermine effective programs.”*

In South Asia, anecdotal evidence and research are demonstrating the extent of the role of stigma in hampering prevention, treatment, and care of HIV and AIDS. For instance, a study in India found that 34 percent of students, faculty, and technical staff of the public health services would not associate with people living with HIV and AIDS.

The HIV epidemic in South Asia is mainly driven by high risk practices such as sex work, injecting drug use and unprotected sex between men.

*“Many of the people most at risk for HIV around the world deal with stigma on a regular basis, posing challenges to achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support,”* said **UNAIDS Executive Director Dr. Peter Piot.** *“It is encouraging to see innovative steps being taken towards addressing these issues in South Asia, where stigma and discrimination remain serious problems.”*

The South Asia Regional Development Marketplace is implemented in partnership with <sup>1</sup>UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNODC, UNDP, GFATM and with the private sector and it is open to all — civil society groups, social entrepreneurs, youth organizations, private foundations, academia, and private sector corporations — with unique ideas that may not attract funding from traditional sources of finance. The maximum award will be US\$40,000 per proposal. Proposals will be accepted until January 21, 2008.

The Development Marketplace is a World Bank program that uses a competitive and transparent process to support grassroots initiatives with innovative approaches to solving challenging development issues. The program has awarded nearly \$34 million to roughly 800 small-scale projects over the last seven years.

Proposals can be submitted online through the South Asia Regional Development Marketplace website — <http://www.worldbank.org/sardm2008>

*For more information about HIV/AIDS in South Asia, visit <http://www.worldbank.org/saraids>*

*For more information about the World Bank's work in South Asia, please visit <http://www.worldbank.org/sar>*

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<sup>1</sup> Joint United Nations Program on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), The Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM)