

KENYAN BUSINESS LEADER NAMED UNAIDS SPECIAL ADVISOR TO STRENGTHEN BUSINESS RESPONSE TO AIDS

Geneva, 30 April 2004 – Chris Kirubi, a leading Kenyan businessman and Chairman of the Kenya Private Sector HIV/AIDS Business Council, has been named Special Advisor to the UNAIDS Executive Director in an effort to strengthen the business response to AIDS in East Africa. Mr Kirubi has agreed to accept this honorary position on a voluntary basis for one year. He is also the corporate advisory board member of the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS.

“I commend Mr Kirubi for his ongoing commitment to the fight against AIDS,” said Dr Peter Piot, UNAIDS Executive Director. “As the business sector is a key partner in the AIDS response, Mr Kirubi will help mobilize businesses in East Africa to respond to the AIDS epidemic in the region.”

Businesses can become involved in the AIDS fight in several ways. They can implement HIV prevention and care programmes and policies in the workplace and engage business leaders to be advocates on AIDS, lobbying for greater action and partnerships with governments and civil society. In South Africa, for example, the gold-mining industry has implemented HIV prevention programmes for miners. The programmes have included mass distribution of condoms, medical care and treatment for sexually transmitted infections and HIV awareness campaigns.

Outside Southern Africa, countries in East Africa continue to be among the hardest-hit by AIDS, with national adult HIV prevalence rates ranging between 5 and 10 percent.