

PRESS RELEASE

Gala to raise funds to stop new HIV infections among children

GENEVA, 19 March 2015—UNAIDS, in partnership with the hotel InterContinental Genève, Cartier and Etihad Airways, is holding its first fundraising gala, in Geneva, Switzerland. The event is part of UNAIDS' efforts to ensure that children everywhere are free from HIV and that mothers have access to antiretroviral medicines to ensure that they stay alive and well.

The gala is being held under the patronage of Caroline Rupert, Kweku Mandela and Ndaba Mandela, and is being attended by personalities from both Switzerland and abroad.

The Executive Director of UNAIDS, Michel Sidibé opened the event, emphasizing the importance of stopping new HIV infections among children. "The science and medicines exist to ensure that no child becomes infected with HIV. Mobilizing innovative partnerships and increased resources will be vital to reaching all women and children in need of life-saving HIV prevention and treatment services."

Florence Ngobeni-Allen, Global Ambassador for the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, from South Africa, and Ashley Rose Murphy, from Canada, spoke about their experiences of living with HIV. "I was born in 1998, when Canada had the medications and the ability to ensure that almost zero babies were born with HIV. I should not have HIV. But I do," said Ms Murphy. "Now these life-saving medications can be available everywhere. If we work hard, we can make sure that no one, no matter where they live, is born with HIV."

The musical highlight of the evening will be the Norwegian duo Nico & Vinz performing their hit songs Am I Wrong and My Melody, a song dedicated to people living with HIV.

A live auction will be curated by David Bennett from Sotheby's, for which Cartier has provided a set of haute jewellery earrings and a lady's watch. Further items include pieces from Victoria Beckham's collection, Christian Louboutin custom-made shoes, a watch from Piaget and a Nelson Mandela limited edition print donated by Annie Leibovitz.

The theme of the gala is "Cities around the world". Cities' responses to HIV have been at the forefront since the start of the epidemic. Fast-Tracking the response to HIV in cities will be essential to ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030.

The partnership between UNAIDS and the hotel InterContinental Genève began in December 2013 with the launch of the [Where History is Made](#) campaign, a joint initiative to raise funds to support the *Global Plan towards the elimination of new HIV infections among children by 2015 and keeping their mothers alive* (Global Plan).

In 2013, some 240 000 children became newly infected with HIV and 190 000 children died of AIDS-related illnesses. Without HIV treatment, half of all children born with HIV die by the age of two and most die before their fifth birthday.

The Global Plan aims to reduce the number of new HIV infections among children by 90% and AIDS-related deaths among pregnant women and children by 50%. It focuses on all countries, but particularly on the 22 countries where 90% of new HIV infections among children occur.

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UNAIDS

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) leads and inspires the world to achieve its shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. UNAIDS unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank—and works closely with global and national partners towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030. Learn more at unaids.org and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.

Quote sheet

Michel Sidibé Executive Director of UNAIDS

“The science and medicines exist to ensure that no child becomes infected with HIV. Mobilizing innovative partnerships and increased resources will be vital to reaching all women and children in need of life-saving HIV prevention and treatment services.”

Jürgen Baumhoff, General Manager, hotel InterContinental Genève

“It is an honour and moral imperative to support the AIDS response as much as we can. This gala is just the start, and I am looking forward to a continued collaboration with UNAIDS.”

Florence Ngobeni-Allen, Global Ambassador for the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation

“No woman or parent should ever have to endure the pain of losing a child. No child should ever lose their parents to AIDS. Nowadays, mother-to-child transmission of HIV is preventable, and with the right support, we can achieve a future free of AIDS.”

Ashley Rose Murphy

“I was born in 1998, when Canada had the medications and the ability to ensure that almost zero babies were born with HIV back then. I should not have HIV. But I do. Now these life-saving medications can be available everywhere, if we work hard to make sure that no one, no matter where they live, is born with HIV.”

Caroline Rupert

“I have worked with children affected by HIV in Cape Town. The myth we tell ourselves is that they have a built-in resilience allowing them to cope; but the truth is they are just children, like every child in the world, and they need support. It is tragic for any child to be born sick when we can prevent it. This is working... we just have to do more of it.”

Kweku Mandela

“My grandfather taught us the importance of working together to bring about change and the global response to HIV is an example of that. The progress we’ve seen is unprecedented but the work is not done. We must continue, together, to reach the end of the AIDS epidemic.”

Ndaba Mandela

“Ensuring zero new HIV infections among children is achievable. We need to inspire the younger generation to help make this a reality.”

Nico & Vinz

“So many stories inspire our music, and through our music, we can reach so many people. We want to spread the word, raise awareness for HIV and fight negativity with positivity.”