

Press release

African media personality Gaetano Kagwa appointed as UNAIDS Special Representative

Johannesburg, 17 October 2007 – African media personality Gaetano Kagwa has been appointed as a Special Representative for the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). In this role, the popular host of the M-NET African lifestyle television program Studio 53 and former Big Brother Africa contestant will raise awareness and carry out advocacy work on AIDS.

Gaetano Kagwa, who is from Uganda, has long been committed to the AIDS response in Africa, disseminating HIV prevention messages using his public platform to reach young people on issues related to HIV prevention.

Having first grasped the public's attention as a housemate in the first Big Brother Africa TV show in 2003, Gaetano will make his first appearance as a UNAIDS Special Representative by appearing on Big Brother Africa in support of the United Nations Millennium Goals Campaign, where he will highlight the importance of HIV prevention.

"I look forward to my work as UNAIDS Special Representative," said Gaetano Kagwa. "I will use this position to start an open and honest public dialogue about sex and HIV prevention and bring needed attention to gender inequality by reaching out to my young brothers. If we don't talk frankly with youth about gender and HIV, nothing can change."

"We are delighted to be working with Gaetano Kagwa to help address the drivers of the AIDS epidemic," said Peter Piot, UNAIDS Executive Director. "Gaetano can help make a difference by reaching out to young men and women with vital information on HIV prevention – this is critical to making progress in the AIDS response."

Sub-Saharan Africa is home to over 10% of the world's population, with nearly 60% of the world's people living with HIV – the majority of whom are women.

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UNAIDS is an innovative joint venture of the United Nations, bringing together the efforts and resources of the UNAIDS Secretariat and ten UN system organizations in the AIDS response. The Secretariat headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland—with staff on the ground in more than 80 countries. Coherent action on AIDS by the UN system is coordinated in countries through UN theme groups, and joint programmes on AIDS. UNAIDS' Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Visit the UNAIDS Web site at www.unaids.org