

## PRESS RELEASE

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## REPORT FINDS THAT BUSINESS COALITIONS ARE HELPING ONE MILLION COMPANIES TACKLE AIDS IN THE WORKPLACE

**Davos, Switzerland, 24 January 2008** – The Global Health Initiative (GHI) of the World Economic Forum today releases the first global report on Business Coalitions – *Business Coalitions Tackling AIDS: A Worldwide Review* – and the role they play in supporting the private sector to tackle AIDS around the world.

Business Coalitions have emerged as a highly effective platform for businesses to come together and address the challenges of AIDS. To date, four regional and 47 national Business Coalitions have been formed, and together they have supported over one million companies in implementing local AIDS workplace programmes. They are a relatively new concept worldwide; over 40% were launched in the last two years and over 60% in the last five.

In light of the rapid proliferation of Business Coalitions, this report was commissioned as an in-depth study of the nature and scope of their activities with the aim of making companies more aware of their potential, contributing to the design of AIDS workplace programmes and sharing best practices regarding their structure and operations.

“By placing a spotlight on the increasingly important role that Business Coalitions are playing in the response to AIDS around the world, we hope that this global report will spur further engagement and action by businesses,” said Richard Samans, Managing Director at the Forum. “Business Coalitions help individual companies respond to the pandemic more effectively through collaboration, in particular by providing them with tools and processes that have been developed and tested in practice by their peers.”

The report presents the current global landscape of Business Coalition activity, reviewing their different organizational, governance, membership and financial models, outlining best practices and highlighting the key challenges they face as they strive to serve the private sector. The report underlines five points of consideration for existing and emerging coalitions to effectively support businesses in tackling AIDS while ensuring their long-term stability:

- Establish a coalition based on national HIV prevalence and the impact on local businesses
- Engage all relevant stakeholders upfront before launching a national coalition
- Ensure continued private sector engagement and investment
- Adapt the business model and services to suit the changing environment
- Proactively seek to build in-house skills and expertise

Business Coalitions typically involve a number of companies coming together at a regional or national level to solve some of the most common challenges linked to addressing the AIDS epidemic in the workplace. They act as a voice for the private sector and increase business action both through advocacy and by supporting the design, development and implementation of AIDS workplace programmes. They achieve their objectives by providing the necessary materials, tools and training, facilitating treatment programmes and developing key strategic relationships and partnerships.

“As businesses strive for excellence in local markets, they rely on their workforce to help deliver this vision. Protecting employees from the threat of AIDS is a key business challenge for companies working in high prevalence areas,” said Mark Foster, Group Chief Executive, Management Consulting and Integrated Markets, Accenture, United Kingdom – a Partner of the GHI and chair of its non-executive board. “Business Coalitions

have emerged as an ideal platform for multinational, national and local businesses to come together and jointly address this dreadful epidemic.”

The report was developed by the GHI in partnership with the World Bank, UNAIDS and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) and with the support of the Corporate Council of Africa (CCA) and the PharmAccess Foundation. These organizations all see Business Coalitions as a vital tool to increase private sector involvement in the response to AIDS. Furthermore, the study found that with support from key stakeholders such as governments, non-governmental organizations and civil society, Business Coalitions can deliver programmes that save costs, avoid duplication of effort, and pool skills and resources.

“Businesses bring creativity and innovation to the AIDS response; they have specific skills and expertise in key areas such as management, media, logistics and finance which make them a valued partner in the response to the epidemic. The Business Coalitions help to ensure that the response is coordinated and that knowledge and expertise is shared across the board,” said Peter Piot, Executive Director, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and Undersecretary-General, United Nations, Geneva. “I hope this report will encourage more companies to join an existing coalition or create the impetus to establish a new one.”

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#### **About the Global Health Initiative**

The goal of the **Global Health Initiative** (GHI) of the World Economic Forum is to facilitate and stimulate greater business engagement in health systems and in the fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria. To achieve this goal, the GHI works closely with the World Economic Forum's member companies as well as UNAIDS, the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria and the Stop TB and Roll Back Malaria partnerships. A broad range of NGOs and other members of civil society, as well as governments, have also joined the efforts of the GHI. The GHI provides a unique platform for dialogue, partnership and action on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and health systems involving both the private and the public sector. It coordinates a community of more than 230 companies that are confronting similar fundamental health challenges to their operations. In particular, the GHI provides a forum to share experiences, to define generally accepted standards and to act as an advocate for the private sector. For further information please go to <http://www.weforum.org/globalhealth>

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