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Advocates for Health Millennium Development Goals Unite to Demand World Leaders Honor Funding Commitments

***Found: Hundreds of Billions of Dollars to Save the Wealthiest Corporations
Lost: Billions of Dollars of G8 Commitments to Save Millions of Human Lives***

Cape Town -- In an unprecedented and historic show of unity, advocates for all the health Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have charged the leaders of G-8 countries with reneging on their commitments to health by chronically underfunding programs for AIDS, TB, maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, and health systems strengthening across the globe.

The coalition of advocates demands that world leaders make the health of men, women, and children around the world as important a priority as the health of banks, Wall Street investment firms, and auto companies and calls on donor governments to partner with civil society to strengthen accountability from recipient countries.

"We are already seeing people die and families forced further into poverty by healthcare costs as a direct result of this global economic crisis," said Dr. Lola Dare, Executive Secretary of the African Council for Sustainable Health Development (ACOSHED). "The fickle policy decisions of world leaders and national government are further compounding these problems. The global health community is speaking with one voice on this urgent need. We can no longer permit the world to be distracted by false choices — between one disease and another, between a mother's life and that of her children, between treating sick people now, in their home communities, and building sustainable health systems for the future to deliver basic health care that can save lives."

"Investments now in HIV and health broadly are fundamental prerequisites for global development," said Julio Montaner, President of the International AIDS Society.

The global economic downturn is leading to significant backsliding in governments' commitments to funding for health programs in developing countries. "The rhetoric by heads of state at this year's G-8 summit was, as usual, noble and righteous. They produced statements about their support for health systems strengthening, maternal and child health, and integrated health service delivery," said Gregg Gonsalves, a co-founder of the International Treatment Preparedness Coalition. "But, as has come to be the unfortunate pattern, the financial commitments made by the most powerful of the world were unacceptably low or worse, not made at all."

“At least a million additional lives are in jeopardy because of this economic crisis. We are calling for the world’s richest countries to support their words with concrete action and back up their promises with the money necessary to fulfill them,” said Ann Starrs, President of Family Care International.

“We estimate that to meet the promised health needs of less developed countries would take an increased investment by high income countries and developing country governments of around \$150 billion a year¹. The AIG bailout alone was \$170 billion,” said Brook Baker, Professor of Law at Northeastern University and Policy Analyst for the US-based Health GAP. “Or to look at it another way, for 36% of what countries have spent in one year on direct bailouts of corporate and financial interests, rich countries alone could fully fund the additional \$944 billion that we estimate is needed from now through 2015 to meet all MDG and health systems strengthening needs in less developed countries.” Developed countries have so far contributed over \$2.5 trillion in direct bailouts and over \$6 trillion in ‘guarantees.’²

“All we seem to be getting from the bailouts so far is record level projected bonus payouts for Wall Street,” added Gonsalves. “But we know with one hundred percent certainty that many more people will die in 2010 because of this bailout, probably 100 times as many as the 13,000 Goldman Sachs employees who are projected to get compensation of over \$500,000 each.”

The coalition of global health advocates demands that each G-8 country pays 100% of the commitments they have made for 2010 including: for Universal Access to AIDS treatment, prevention, and care; full funding for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; as well as additional commitments made for maternal child health and health systems strengthening.

“The fact that governments have quickly passed legislation to bailout the banks and companies that created this global financial crisis proves that there is sufficient capital to support those whose lives have been most affected by the crisis. What is needed is sufficient will,” said Donna Barry of Partners In Health in the USA.

The U.S. President’s Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) has been flat funded for three years; the G-8 countries have underfunded the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria by \$4 to 9 billion; donor country promises to fund maternal and child health and sexual and reproductive health programs are wholly insufficient to the task; and no G-8 country has made sufficient commitments to contribute significantly to expanding and strengthening the health workforce, to supporting community-based prevention and care, or to strengthening health systems and health infrastructure.

¹ Baker, B. The Long and Tortured Road to Adequate, Sustained, and Spendable Domestic and Donor Financing for Health. Available at <http://www.icssupport.org/PDF/Discussion%20paper%20on%20Health%20Financing%20by%20Brook%20Baker.pdf>

² Grail Research, http://www.grailresearch.com/pdf/ContentPodsPdf/Global_Bailout_Tracker.pdf

“The global economic situation cannot be used as an excuse to renege on financial commitments,” said Kieran Daly, Executive Director of the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO). “Hundreds of billions of dollars, pounds, and euros magically appeared to bail out global financial markets and corporations. We do not want to believe that this bailout came at the cost of millions of human lives.”

“The only way we will make real progress on meeting the MDGs is for donor countries to engage with developing country governments, and for developing country governments to commit financially and politically to revitalizing their national health systems to meet the challenges of HIV, sexual and reproductive health, maternal health, child survival and other health problems. Governments also can not forget that before 2015, they have other goals to meet, including UNGASS-AIDS 2010 and the Cairo Plan of Action,” said Alessandra Nilo of GESTOS in Brazil.

Leaders representing advocates for more than 25 organizations focused on AIDS, TB, maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health and primary health care came together in Stony Point, New York in May 2009 to initiate a partnership devoted to advocating for the universal right to health. A Declaration of Solidarity for a Unified Movement for the Right to Health was drafted at that meeting, and is being endorsed by health and human rights organizations around the world³. This growing union of advocates, many of whom are signed on to this document, is now working in solidarity to hold the powers of the world accountable.

“We are all health and human rights advocates and we refuse to be pitted against each other,” said Paula Akugizibwe of the AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa, “MDGs are simply categories of different needs that exist within the same human being. The same mother who needs ART to prevent the transmission of HIV to her infant also needs adequate nutrition and her children need clean water and immunizations. The same community that needs infection control for TB also needs it for influenza; and insufficient financial and human resources for health may prevent them from having any of these rights fulfilled.”

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Following is the initial group of health organizations supporting this statement:

A la Alianza Nacional "Campaña por una Convención Interamericana de los Derechos Sexuales y Derechos Reproductivos" – Bolivia
ABIA – Brazil
ACCSI – Acción Ciudadana Contra el SIDA, Venezuela,
African Council for Sustainable Health Development (ACOSHED)
African Council of AIDS Service Organizations (AfriCASO)
African CS Partnership for Health Systems Strengthening
AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa
AIDS and Society Research Unit, University of Cape Town
Aids Fonds
AIDS-Free World

³ The full text of the declaration is available at: <http://act.pih.org/page/s/declaration>

Alianza Nacional de Grupos de Personas que viven con VIH o sida de Guatemala
 Alianza Nacional de Hombres Gay, Trans y Hombres que Tienen Sexo Con Hombres (A-GTH) – Dominican Republic
 Amigos Siempre Amigos (ASA) – Dominican Republic
 Asian Pacific Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS
 Asociacion Nacional de Personas Positivas Vida Nueva – El Salvador
 Asociación Vida – Guatemala
 Balance Promoción para el Desarrollo y Juventud – México
 BRAC
 Caribbean Treatment Access Group
 Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition
 Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir – México
 Center for Health and Gender Equity
 Central African Treatment Access Group
 Centre for Health Sciences Training, Research and Development (CHESTRAD)
 Centro de Información y Desarrollo de la Mujer - CIDEM.– Bolivia
 Centro de Promoción y Defensa por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos (PROMSEX) –Perú
 CNS Mujeres – Uruguay
 Colectiva Mujer y Salud – Dominican Republic
 Colectiva por el Derecho a Decidir – Costa Rica
 Colectivo Feminista Mujeres Universitarias.– Honduras
 Colectivo TLGB de Bolivia
 Comunicación, Intercambio y Desarrollo Humano en América Latina A. C. –CIDHAL A.C.
 Convergencia de Mujeres – Honduras
 Cordaid
 Corporación Chilena de Prevención del SIDA (ACCIONGAY) – Chile
 East African Treatment Access Movement (EATAM)
 El Closet de Sor Juana, Mexico
 Equidad de Género: Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia A.C – Mexico
 Family Care International
 FEIM – Argentina
 Foro de Mujeres y Políticas de Población – Mexico
 Fórum de Ong Aids do Estado de São Paulo – Brazil
 Fundacion Arcoiris pro el Respeto a la Diversidad Sexual – Mexico
 Fundación Buenos Aires SIDA – Argentina
 Fundación Igualdad LGBT – Bolívia
 Fundación REDVIHDA – Bolívia
 GAPA-SP
 GAPA/RS – Brazil
 GAPA/SP – Brazil
 GESTOS – Soropositivity, Communication and Gender Issues – Brazil
 GRUPAJUS – Brazil
 Grupo De Antropologia Medica Critica Universidad Nacional De Colombia
 Grupo de Información en Reproducción Elegida (GIRE) – México
 Guyana Human Rights Association. – Guyana
 Health & Development Networks (HDN)
 Health care is not for Commerce – LAC
 Health GAP
 Hélène De Beir Foundation – Belgium
 Instituto para el Desarrollo Humano – Bolivia
 International AIDS Society
 International Civil Society Support
 International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS – UK
 International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO)
 INTILLA Asociacion Civil – Argentina
 International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC)
 ITPC India
 ITPC Nepal
 ITPC RU – Eastern Europe/Central Asia
 Jovenes Feministas Universitarias – Honduras

La Coalicion Internacional de Activistas dn Tratamientos (CIAT) – Latinoamérica
La Red de Voluntarios de Amigos Siempre Amigos (RevASA) – Dominican Republic
Latin American and Caribbean Council of NGO with AIDS Services (LACCASO)
Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network (LACWHN)
LIGA Bonaerense de Diversidad Sexual – Argentina
Liga Colombiana de Lucha Contra el Sida – Colombia
Mujer y Salud – MYSU – Uruguay
National AIDS Committee – Guyana
Observatorio de Violencia Social y de Género de la Sierra Norte de Puebla – Mexico
Partners in Health
Physicians for Human Rights
PLUS, International AIDS Coalition
Positive Action for Treatment Access (PATA) – Nigeria
Red Argentina de Mujeres
Red Argentina de Mujeres Viviendo con VIH-SIDA (RAMVIHS) – Argentina
Red Argentina de Personas Positivas (REDAR POSITIVA) – Argentina
Red Latinoamericana de Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir.– Latin America
Red por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos – México
Redlac – Honduras
RESULTS USA
Senderos Asociacion Mutual – Colombia
SIDACTION
STOP AIDS NOW!
Treatment Action Campaign (TAC)
Treatment Action Group (TAG)
West African Treatment Access Group
Women Won't Wait – Latin America