

Urgent Call for U.S. Initiative on Health Workforce in AIDS-Impacted Countries¹

(January 1 2006) The critical shortage of health care workers and weak health systems is the key bottleneck to scaling up access to AIDS treatment. While the needs of individual countries must be determined locally, experts estimate that sub-Saharan Africa needs at least 1 million new health workers to meet essential health needs. Sustained commitment and creative action are necessary to develop and support the health workforce needed to secure the right to health and achieve universal access to AIDS treatment by 2010, as well as other international health goals.

We urge the President of the United States and Members of Congress to lead a global health workforce initiative in AIDS ravaged countries. The U.S. should:

1. Invest significant new resources in a number of impoverished countries to recruit, train, support, and effectively utilize the number of health workers needed to achieve universal access to AIDS treatment for all in need by 2010 and universal access to primary health care by 2015, while supporting a new G8 initiative to assist additional countries. The U.S. should contribute at least 1/3 of the funds, estimated at \$650 million for the first year and scaling to \$2.6 billion over time, for a five-year total of \$8 billion. The U.S. contributions should support national human resource plans within the context of comprehensive country health plans that improve health systems performance to achieve sustainable results. Funding should be predictable and long-term, flowing directly to the public sector and local NGO and faith-based care providers as appropriate. The U.S. should also support effective regional and global initiatives.

The U.S. should invest in (a) long-term strategic planning; (b) strengthening and expanding capacity of health training institutions; (c) retaining health workers through adequate compensation, safe and improved work conditions, stronger supervision, continuing education, and care including AIDS treatment; (d) human resource and fiscal management; (e) equitable distribution including incentives to work in underserved areas; (f) re-deploying unemployed health workers.

2. Cover costs to public health systems of implementing PEPFAR and other U.S. initiatives. U.S. agencies should support training and retention for at least the number of indigenous health workers necessary to meet program goals. Aggressive proactive measures must be adopted to avoid drawing from other local health priorities or programs.

3. Launch a substantial community health worker initiative to train, compensate, and deploy community members, especially women and PLWHA, to provide basic care, treatment, prevention services, and referrals. Community health workers should have access to care, including AIDS treatment, and be offered a career pathway. The program should be integrated into primary health systems, and ensure adequate supervision, support, and ongoing training.

4. Reduce brain drain by increasing the number of U.S. health professional graduates and improving U.S. health worker distribution. The U.S. government and professional health communities should expand training opportunities in the U.S., discourage active recruitment from poor nations, and work with developing and developed countries and international organizations to develop migration and recruitment policies that mutually benefit source and destination countries. Some experts estimate that the U.S. will need to increase the annual number of medical school graduates by at least 5,000 and of nursing graduates by at least 25,000 over the next 10-15 years.

5. Create new possibilities for U.S. and diaspora health workers to serve abroad to help meet immediate care and treatment needs while providing training and support to strengthen health systems. The U.S. should develop programs in cooperation with local governments, prioritize strengthening local institutions, and support South-South exchanges.

6. Convene and support country-level teams of all stakeholders to devise and implement coordinated plans to achieve universal access to health services. The U.S. should provide technical assistance and facilitate the country team's access to all necessary sources of external funding. Cross-sectoral country-level planning is necessary to promote national ownership, donor coordination, and cross-sectoral planning and harmonization.

7. Contribute 1/3 of the predicted need of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, for both the coming year and, gradually, a sum equivalent to an additional year to alleviate donor shortfalls and enable more ambitious applications. Health systems strengthening must be sustained as a category of GFATM financing.

8. Reform IMF-supported spending and wage policies that limit national and donor investments in health and education. Barriers to access such as user-fees for health and education should be eliminated. The U.S. should provide funds to compensate for lost revenue and support increased utilization of services.

9. Remove Congressional and agency limits to funding recurrent expenses, salaries, and sectorwide approaches, and allow flexibility to agencies seeking to strengthen health systems and scale-up access to care and prevention.

¹ For more information or to offer your endorsement, please contact pdavis@healthgap.org * +1 215.833.4102

The undersigned organizations and experts urge the President and Congress of the United States to adopt and implement these recommendations.

Distinguished experts:

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Jon Ungphakorn, Senator, Government of Thailand, Board Secretary AIDS Access Foundation, Thailand

US and US-Based International Organizations:

ActionAid International USA
Advocates for Youth, USA
Africa Action, USA
Africa Faith and Justice Network, USA
Africa Institute, American Jewish Committee, USA
African Services Committee, NY
Africare, Int'l
Aid for AIDS, Int'l
AIDS Foundation of Chicago, IL
AIDS Survival Project, GA
AIDS Treatment News, USA
AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition (AVAC), USA
AIDSETI-AIDS Empowerment & Treatment Int'l
American Academy of HIV Medicine, USA
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, USA
American Jewish World Service, USA
American Medical Student Association (AMSA) USA
American Public Health Association, Int'l Health Section, USA
amFAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research. USA
AMREF (African Medical & Research Foundation) USA
Artists for a New South Africa, USA
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care, USA
CARE USA
Catholic Medical Mission Board, Int'l
CHANGE (Center for Health and Gender Equity), USA
Church World Service, Int'l
Constituency for Africa (CFA), USA

ACT UP Austin, TX
ACT UP New York, NY
ACT UP Philadelphia, PA
ActionAIDS, PA
African Immigrant and Refugee Foundation (AIRF), USA
AIDS Action Baltimore, MD
AIDS Project of Southern Vermont, VT
AIDS Research Alliance, CA
AMSA Univ. of Pittsburgh School of Medicine Chapter, PA
Asian Americans United, PA
Bienestar, CA
Bon Secours Health System, MD
Center for Policy Analysis on Trade & Health (CPATH), USA
Child Family Health International (CFHI), Int'l
CitiWide Harm Reduction, NY
Civic Life International Inc., Nigeria/USA
Code Pink, USA
Community Health Worker Network, NY
Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP), USA
DharmaNet International, USA
END AIDS NOW! NY
Eritrean Community for Human Rights and Refugee Protection, USA
Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER), PA
Forum for Global Action, Int'l
Foundation for Integrative AIDS Research (FIAR), NY
Global Violence Prevention Advocacy, MA

International and multicountry organizations based overseas:

ACT UP Paris, France
Action Against Aids, Germany
African Council for Sustainable Health Devm'nt (ACOSHED), Int'l
Africaso, Int'l
Agua Buena Human Rights Association, Costa Rica
AIDS Access Foundation, Thailand
AIDS Law Project, South Africa
AIDS Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA), South Africa
All-Ukraine PLWH Network, Ukraine
Ärzte für die Dritte Welt, Germany
Associação Grupo Aids, Apoio, Vida, Esperança, Brazil
Association of Protestant Churches and Missions (EMW), Germany
Atbalsta Grupa Inficētajiem HIV un AIDS Slimniekiem, Latvia

Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, USA, Int'l
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, USA
Family Care International
Global AIDS Alliance, USA
Global AIDS Interfaith Alliance, CA
Global Exchange, USA
Global Health Council, USA
GMHC Gay Men's Health Crisis, NY
Health GAP (Global Access Project), USA
Housing Works, NY
International Association of Physicians in AIDS Care (IAPAC), Int'l
John Snow Inc. (JSI), Int'l
Jubilee USA
Latino Commission on AIDS, NY
Maryknoll AIDS Task Force, Int'l
Mennonite Central Committee, USA
National AIDS Fund, USA
Nat'l Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD), USA
National Association of Black Social Workers, USA
National Association of People With AIDS (NAPWA) USA
National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC), USA
PATH (Program for Appropriate Technology in Health), Int'l
Pangaea Global AIDS Foundation, Int'l
Partners in Health, Int'l
Physicians for Human Rights, USA
Presbyterian Church AIDS Core Team USA
Presbyterian Church, DC Office, USA
Project Inform, USA

Harambee Africa Int'l, DC
Harm Reduction Coalition, USA
Harvard AIDS Coalition, MA
Health Alliance International, WA, Int'l
Health Equity Project, USA
Hesperian Foundation, USA
HOPE Universal Family Connection, IL
Inova Hospital Juniper Program, VA
Institute for the Study of Civic Values, PA
International AIDS Empowerment, TX
International Management, Policy and Systems Analysis LLC, Int'l
KAIPPG International, USA
Kentucky Divest Campaign, KY
Leadership Council, Sisters, Servants of Immaculate Heart of Mary, MI
Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center, CA
Make Art/STOP AIDS, CA
Marley AIDS Advocacy, PA
Medilinks, USA
MesoAmerica Health Assistance Project of California (MAHAPCA), CA
Metropolitan Community Church of New York, NY
Minnesota International Health Volunteers (MIHV), Int'l
New Mexico POZ Coalition, NM
New York City AIDS Housing Network, NY
PathWaysPA, PA
People's Health Movement-USA
Per Ankh Institute, US Virgin Islands
Philadelphia Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), PA
Philadelphia FIGHT, PA

Beijing AIZHIXING Institute of Health Education, China
British Columbia Persons With AIDS Society (BCPWA), Canada
Brot für die Welt/Bread for the World, Germany
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Canada
Canadian Treatment Action Council (CTAC), Canada
Christian Health Association of Ghana (CHAG), Ghana
Christian Health Association Of Kenya (CHAK), Kenya
Dignitas International, Canada
Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network (EPN) Int'l
Equinet Network for Equity in Health in East and Southern Africa
European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG), Int'l
FXB (Francois-Xavier Bagnoud) International

RESULTS, USA
Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, East American Province, USA
San Francisco AIDS Foundation, CA
Seattle University College of Nursing, WA
SIECUS - Sexuality Information & Education Council of the U.S.A.
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Louis Province, USA
Sisters of the Holy Cross-Congregation Justice Cmte, IN
Sojourners, USA
Street Works, TN
Student Campaign for Child Survival, USA
Student Global AIDS Campaign, USA
The AIDS Institute, USA
Title II Community AIDS National Network, USA
Treatment Action Group, USA
TrueMajorityACTION, USA
United Church of Christ Network for Environmental and Economic Responsibility, USA
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society, USA
Universities Allied for Essential Medicines, USA
University Coalitions for Global Health, USA
Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk for Justice and Peace, NY
Vermont PWA Coalition, VT
Washington Office on Africa, USA
Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Diseases, CA
World Hunger Year, Inc. (WHY), USA
World Learning, Int'l

Planet POZ, NM, Kenya
Planned Parenthood Golden Gate, CA
Priority Africa Network (PAN), CA
PROTOTYPES, Centers for Innovation in Health, Mental Health and Social Services, USA
Queers for Economic Justice, NY, USA
Quixote Center/Quest for Peace, USA
Ride for World Health, OH
Roots of Promise/Thomas Merton Center, PA
Share International, USA
South Africa Development Fund, MA, USA
South Carolina Campaign to End AIDS, SC
Student Campaign for Child Survival, (SCCS) Columbia Chapter, NY
Students for International Change, Int'l
TechWrite Inc., CO
The GLEA Foundation, HI
The River Fund, USA
The Well Project, VA
The Women's Center Montefiore Medical Center, NY
Transparency and Accountability Network, USA
Tri-State Coalition for Responsible Investment, NJ
Uganda Village Project, USA
Ukimwi Orphans Assistance, USA
US Committee for Scientific Cooperation with Vietnam, USA
White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood, Int'l
Who's Positive, PA
Wilson Resource Center, IA
Women's Equity in Access to Care & Treatment (WE-ACTx), Int'l

Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ), Zimbabwe
Gertrude's Children's Hospital, Kenya
Ghana AIDS Treatment Access Group (GATAG), Ghana
Global Equity Gauge Alliance (GEGA) Int'l
Global Healthcare Information Network, UK
Global Network of People living with HIV/AIDS (GNP+), Int'l
Grupo de Trabajo sobre Tratamientos del VIH (gTt), Spain
Health Action International (HAI) Africa, Int'l
Health and Development Networks (Ireland/Thailand), Int'l
Health Systems Trust, South Africa
HealthPartners, Kenya
HIV/AIDS Control Agency (HACA), Nigeria

International Community for Relief of Starvation and Suffering (ICROSS), Int'l-Kenya, Ireland, Canada
International Women's Health Coalition, IP-Left, South Korea
Joint Clinical Research Centre, Uganda
International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO), Int'l
Kenya AIDS Intervention Prevention Program Group, Kenya
Kenya AIDS NGOs Consortium (KANCO), Kenya
Kenya Health Professional Society, Kenya
Kenya Human Rights Commission, Kenya
Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), Kenya
Kenya Treatment Access Movement (KETAM), Kenya
Malawi Health Equity Network (MHEN), Malawi
Malteser International
Mbarara University Medical Students Association, Uganda

Media AIDS Project (MAP), Nigeria
Medical Mission Sisters' Alliance for Justice, Int'l
Medical Missionaries of Mary, Int'l, Ireland
National Assoc. of People living with AIDS in Nepal (NAPN), Nepal
National Nurses Association of Kenya (NNAK), Kenya
NEPWHAN (Network of People living With HIV/AIDS in Nigeria)
Nepal Red Cross Society, Nepal
Network of African People Living with HIV/AIDS (NAP+), Int'l
Nigerian Air Force Hospital, Nigeria
Oxfam International
People Affected By HIV Organization, DR Congo
Positive Malaysian Treatment Access and Advocacy Group (MTAAG+), Malaysia.
Planned Parenthood Federation, Int'l
Public Services International (PSI), Int'l
Society of Women Against AIDS in Africa (SWAA), Int'l

Solidarité Sida, France
Solidarity & Action Against HIV Infection in India (SAATHII) Int'l
Student Stop AIDS Campaign, UK
Students Against Global AIDS (SAGA), Canada
Students For Equity In Healthcare, Makerere Med School, Uganda
Students Partnership Worldwide (SPW), Int'l
Sudan Council of Churches, Sudan
Thai AIDS Treatment Action Group (TTAG), Thailand
The AIDS Support Organization (TASO), Uganda
Treatment Action Campaign, South Africa
UK Coalition of People Living with HIV/AIDS, UK
VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas) UK
Wemos Foundation, the Netherlands
World AIDS Campaign, Int'l
World Care Council, France
Zimbabwe Activists on HIV and AIDS (ZAHA), Zimbabwe

ACT UP Kathmandu, Nepal
Action for Community Development, Uganda
Action Group for Health, Human Rights & HIV/AIDS (AGHA), Uganda
action medeor, Germany
Africa Health and Community Programmes (AHCP), Kenya
Africa Rural Outreach, Uganda
Africa Rural Sustainable Development Association, Tanzania
Africa Youth Leadership, Development & Health (AYLDH), Uganda/Int
African Regional Youth Initiative, Int'l
Afrihealth Information Projects/Afrihealth Optonet Association, Nigeria
Agir ici, France
AIDS Cell, Ibn Sina Academy, India
AIDS-Care-Watch Campaign, Thailand
AIDS-Hilfe Baden-Württemberg e.V., Germany
Aktion Canchanabury e.V., Germany
Alliance Cornerstone Youth Organization, Nigeria
Art-net Development Centre, Kenya
Arunodhaya Migrants Initiatives, India
Association for Rural Development (ARD), India
Association of Kenyan Medical Laboratory Science Officers (AKMLSO), Kenya
Association of Medical Students (AMSUN), Univ. of Nairobi, Kenya
Association of Positive Youth in Nigeria (APYIN)
Bangladesh Health Foundation, Bangladesh
BUKO Pharma-Kampagne, Germany
Centre for Development Research, Uganda
Centre for Positive Care, South Africa
Children for Children Organisation, Gambia
China Orchid AIDS Project, China
Comet Ltd, Malawi
Common Ground Program, Kenya
Community Aid Uganda
Community and Family Health Initiative, Nigeria
CRIAA SA-DC (Centre for Research, Information and Action in Africa-Southern Africa Development and Consulting), Namibia
Deepam Educational Society for Health (DESH), India
Deutsche Welthungerhilfe / German Agro Action, Germany
Development Initiatives International, Uganda
East European & Central Asian Union of PLWH Organisations, Ukraine
Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, Uganda
Freedom Foundation, Centers of Excellence-Substance Abuse & HIV/AIDS, India
Gram Bharati Samiti (GBS), India
Gulu University Medical Students Association, Uganda
Helping Others International, Nigeria
Helpless Rehabilitation Society (HRS), Nepal

Hospice Africa, Uganda
Independent Health & Psychosocial Care Development Initiative, Uganda
International Women AIDS Run, Int'l
Intersect Worldwide, Int'l
Joe Muriuki Training Institute, Kenya
John Mordaunt Trust, UK
Joint Effort To Stop Tears of AIDS (JESTA), Uganda
Jyotirmayee Mahila Samiti, India
Katholische Arbeitnehmer-Bewegung Deutschlands (KAB), Germany
Kenya Association of Professional Counselors (KAPC)
Kenya Clinical Officers Association (KCOA), Kenya
Kenya Dental Association (KDA), Kenya
Kenya Hospice and Palliative Care Association (KEHPCA), Kenya
Kenya Voluntary Women Rehabilitation Centre, Kenya
Kenya Women Participating in Rural Development (KEWIRA), Kenya
Kenya Youth Programmes, Kenya
Kiota Women's Development Organization (KIWOHEDE), Tanzania
Kiyindi HIV/AIDS community Initiatives, Uganda
Laboratory Concepts, Kenya
Laikipia HIV/AIDS Control Organization, Kenya
Life And Peace Development Organization (LAPEDO), Nigeria
Life Restoration Organization (LIRO), Nigeria
Life Vanguard, Nigeria
Mariam Foundation Centre, Uganda
Mashiah Foundation, Nigeria
McGill Global AIDS Coalition, Canada
Medical Students Against AIDS (MESA), Univ. of Nairobi, Kenya
Medias Au Ruban Rouge, DR Congo
Mentor Volunteers Uganda
Meru Hospice, Kenya
Mgbala Agwa Youth Forum, Nigeria
Moi University Nursing Sciences Department, Kenya
MOMS Club International, Nigeria
MOPGEL, Movement for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Liberia
Mother Africa and Child Care Organisation (MACCO), Ghana
National Women's Lobby and Rights Group (NWLRG), Malawi
Neusser-Eine-Welt-Initiative e.V. (NEWI), Germany
Nigeria Model UN (NgMUN), Nigeria
No Limit For Women Project, Cameroon
Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), Ethiopia
Organization for Social Development of Unemployed Youth, Bangladesh
Pamojahope Center, Kenya

Partners for Int'l Development and Education, Nigeria
People's Health Movement, DR-Congo
Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria
Population & Environmental Monitoring Int'l, Nigeria
Positive Life Organisation (PLO), Nigeria
POWL: Positive Women Leaders of Uganda
Preventive Healthcare Initiative, Nigeria
Progressive Organization of Gays in the Philippines
Project Green, Nigeria
PROMETRA, Kenya
Promoters Of Environmental, Rural Development and Agriculture Business Group (PERDAB), Cameroon
Public Health Impact Research Centre, Nigeria
Raks Thai Foundation, Thailand
Research, Training and Management (RTM) International, Bangladesh
Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (RAPCAN), South Africa
Safe Observer International, DR-Congo
Samo Development organization, Somalia
Save Our Planet Earth (SOPE), Uganda
Save Visions Africa, Nigeria
Shen Yang Ai Zhi Yuan Zhu Center for Health and Education, China
Society of Women Against AIDS in Africa (SWAA), DR-Congo
Society of Women Against AIDS in Kenya
Spurthi, India
Sri Surya Clinic, Child Foundation of India
St. Joseph's Matala Youth Organisation (MAYO), Uganda
St. Mary's Hospital, Nigeria
Student Christian Movement of Great Britain, UK
Strides Society, India
Task Force Of Women For HIV Prevention, DR-Congo
The Carpenter's Foundation International, Nigeria
The Third Choice, Nigeria
Together Against AIDS Positive Association (TAAPA), Uganda
Twana Twitu, Kenya
Uganda CARES, Uganda
Uganda Catholic Secretariat HIV/AIDS Focal Point, Uganda
University of Nairobi Nursing Students Association (NUNSA), Kenya
Vital Hope Support Group, Zimbabwe
WE CARE Development Initiative, Nigeria
Women Living With HIV/AIDS DRC Taskforce, DR-Congo
Women With Purpose International, Nigeria
Workplace Dignity Institute, South Africa
Youth Against HIV/AIDS Initiative, Nigeria
Youth Empowerment Network, Nigeria
Youth HIV/AIDS Alliance (YOHA), Nigeria