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联合国教育、  
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**Address by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO,  
on the occasion of the Information Meeting  
with Permanent Delegates  
on HIV and AIDS**

**UNESCO, 7 September 2007**

Excellencies,  
Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to welcome you for an update on UNESCO's efforts to respond to HIV and AIDS. As you will see, there has been significant progress and new developments since our last information meeting held on this subject in May 2006.

I am delighted to have beside me on the podium Mr Nicholas Burnett, who as of 27 September will be taking up the post of Assistant Director-General for Education. Many of you of course already know Mr Burnett, who since 2004 has been directing the *EFA Global Monitoring Report*. Let me give him the floor so that he can say a few words.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

AIDS is one of the defining issues of our time. Twenty-five years into the epidemic, AIDS is a truly global problem, affecting every country of the world, and undermining our capacity to reduce poverty and secure hard-won development gains, including progress towards Education for All.

Since 1981, 25 million people have died of AIDS-related illnesses and 65 million have been infected with HIV worldwide. In 2006 alone, 4.3 million new infections were recorded, alongside 2.9 million AIDS-related deaths – more than in any previous year.

Today, some 39.5 million people are living with HIV, half of them now women and girls. The relative increase in the proportion of women and girls infected with HIV is particularly alarming.

Since 2004, the number of women living with HIV has grown by over one million. Of these, 76% are in sub-Saharan Africa, where women account for 59% of all adults living with HIV. We must do more to respond to women's needs. I am therefore pleased that Member States have agreed to consider the achievement of gender equality as one of two global priorities for the Organization's next Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013. This will give much needed impetus to UNESCO's fight against AIDS.

Young people between the ages of 15 and 25 comprise 50% of new HIV infections. It is the behaviour of this key age group that will mainly determine the future course of the epidemic, and the reason why efforts are largely focused on this important population. This is also the rationale for UNESCO's own focus on AIDS prevention through education, primarily targeting young people.

Expanded access to treatment of course remains vital. And many of you may be aware that today more people than ever before – 2 million worldwide – are receiving life-prolonging antiretroviral therapy. This represents an increase in global coverage from 8% to 28% in just three years.

Yet, however encouraging and important this development is, we must not forget that for every person who began antiretroviral therapy in 2006, six others became infected with HIV. Unless this trend is reversed, and we manage to dramatically accelerate prevention, global efforts to expand access to HIV treatment will falter and millions more people in the world's poorest countries will die as a result of avoidable HIV infections. Put another way, if HIV prevention were brought to scale, half of the infections projected to occur by 2015 could be averted. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, 52 percent of projected infections could be prevented. For all of these

reasons, prevention stands as the cornerstone of UNESCO's response to the epidemic.

Back in 2001, UNESCO introduced a new strategy on HIV and AIDS, specifically focused on prevention through education. This culminated in 2004 in the launch of the Global Initiative on Education and HIV & AIDS, known as EDUCAIDS, as a vital contribution towards intensifying prevention efforts. EDUCAIDS has since been established as a UNAIDS initiative led by UNESCO, supporting UNESCO's mandated lead role in prevention with young people in educational institutions.

As I explained at our last information meeting, EDUCAIDS is designed to provide support for the implementation of comprehensive national education sector responses to the epidemic. It is one of the three core EFA priorities endorsed by UNESCO's Executive Board and General Conference, alongside the Teacher Training Initiative for sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA), and the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE). The three initiatives are closely interlinked.

More than 30 countries are now involved in EDUCAIDS, and interest in the initiative is such that I expect this number to increase significantly in the coming biennium. By the end of this year, we will be widely distributing new EDUCAIDS implementation support tools, in five language editions, to further assist country partners.

Later in today's meeting you will hear more about EDUCAIDS, including how this initiative is contributing to better coordination and intensified action in a Southern African country highly affected by AIDS.

To ensure that our prevention efforts are as effective as possible, we need to bear in mind the overwhelming evidence that prevention is best approached in a holistic way, that includes consideration of treatment, care and support. UNESCO's approach, as defined in our newly revised strategy for responding to HIV and AIDS, is consistent with the UN goal of universal access to prevention programmes, treatment, care and support by 2010.

The revised UNESCO strategy on HIV and AIDS builds on the two previous versions from 2001 and 2004. It frames UNESCO's actions in the context of the epidemic's unfolding and dynamic character, changes in the international context

shaping the overall response, and developments within UNESCO itself. The revised strategy gives priority to fulfilling UNESCO's responsibilities under the UNAIDS division of labour, and the 2007-2010 UNAIDS Strategic Framework for support to countries' efforts to move towards universal access.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I think it would be of interest to this audience for me to explain the institutional framework within which UNESCO works on HIV and AIDS.

Our starting point, of course, is the C/4 medium-term strategy and C/5 biennial programme and budget, and ensuring that the actions defined there are linked to extra-budgetary funded projects.

Another key mechanism is the UNAIDS Unified Budget and Workplan, or UBW. The UBW is a vital source of extra-budgetary funding – it will contribute US\$ 10.6 million to support UNESCO's work on HIV and AIDS in the next biennium. It is also an important process through which UNAIDS Cosponsors and the UNAIDS Secretariat can align and harmonize their actions.

All Cosponsors are required to match their UBW allocation with regular programme budgets, as well as to leverage additional extra-budgetary funds. Partners who provide important extra-budgetary support to UNESCO in this area include the Japanese, Spanish and Italian Funds-in-Trust, and the OPEC Fund.

This year marks the second year of financial support from the OPEC Fund for UNESCO's work on HIV and AIDS in 12 countries, amounting to US\$ 2.25 million over two years.

Since 2005 the Japanese Government has committed US\$ 2 million. In 2007, this has enabled the expansion of EDUCAIDS in six new countries: Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Madagascar, Mexico, Nigeria and Zambia.

In addition, just last month, the Italian Government confirmed a funding commitment of US\$ 900,000 to support the second phase of the Families First Africa project. Coordinated through UNESCO's Science Sector, the second phase of the project

will consolidate and expand capacity-building for laboratory technicians working in the field of HIV research, as well as provide access to information and training through centres based in Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Cote d'Ivoire.

We also head into the next biennium having secured an additional US\$ 1 million through the UNAIDS UBW. As I have said, this brings the total UBW amount to US\$ 10.6 million for 2008-2009.

In order to strengthen field capacity to implement UNESCO's Strategy for Responding to HIV and AIDS at the country level, I am pleased to announce that I have decided to create four new regional AIDS advisor posts, as Appointments of Limited Duration. These will be based in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Central Asia and Eastern Europe, and in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The new positions will help ensure the delivery of high-quality technical support and services to Member States by all of UNESCO's Sectors. They will enhance UNESCO's work in countries where the Organization does not have a regular presence, and also support joint programming with other UNAIDS Cosponsors and strengthened UN coordination. These posts are a tangible demonstration of UNESCO's commitment to regional and country-level impact.

Increasingly, donors are making extra-budgetary funding available at the country level, through, for example, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief known as 'PEPFAR', and other foundation and private sector support.

We are working to enhance the capacity and skills of UNESCO staff in our field offices so that they can tap into these resources. Later this month, in fact, UNESCO is organizing a skills-building workshop on this very topic with colleagues from seven UNESCO offices in the Asia-Pacific region. If it is shown to be useful, we will support adapted versions of this workshop in other regions.

Strengthening field capacity is particularly important within the current context of UN reform. UNESCO is fully committed to the reform process, and to providing coherent UN support to country-led AIDS strategies at the national level. Through the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), as well as through the "delivering as one" process in UN reform pilot countries, UNESCO is working within

Joint Country Teams on AIDS to ensure that our actions contribute effectively to nationally-identified priorities.

Partnership is the guiding principle to UNESCO's action at country level. This means collaborating closely not only with other UNAIDS Cosponsors and UN agencies, but also with national authorities, regional bodies such as the African Union, bilateral agencies and civil society organizations, including those promoting the meaningful involvement of people living with AIDS. Successful responses to HIV and AIDS will only come about when all of these important stakeholders are working together towards the common goal of turning the tide against AIDS.

At the global level, likewise, UNESCO is working hard to strengthen coordination. This is reflected in the establishment in the Education Sector of a new Division for the Coordination of UN Priorities in Education under the direction of Mark Richmond. It is in this division that I have located responsibility for the coordination of UNESCO's response to HIV and AIDS for all Sectors of the Organization.

An example of the beneficial synergies of this arrangement can be seen by the first-ever working session on AIDS at the 6th Meeting of the EFA High-Level Group in Cairo, Egypt, in November 2006. The working session, entitled "Stronger, more comprehensive responses of the education sector to HIV & AIDS", explored opportunities for the education sector to become more fully engaged in the national response to HIV & AIDS and the potential role of the EFA-Fast Track Initiative and other initiatives in facilitating the development of comprehensive and sector-specific actions. The Cairo Communiqué prioritized support to teachers and vulnerable learners, especially girls, as key aspects of the educational response to the epidemic.

Of course, the call for greater coordination and working to "deliver as one UN" is not new. But the seriousness that I attach to it reflects my belief – and that shared by my counterparts within UNAIDS – of the importance of coordinated action. And one reason why aligning our actions is so important is because despite the substantial increase in funding available – from US\$ 300 million in 1996 to US\$ 8.9 billion in 2006 – this is still only about half of the amount required to support AIDS responses in low- and middle-income countries. It is by working together that we can best maximize the impact of available funds.

I would also like to mention that UNESCO convenes the UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Education (IATT). This important mechanism serves to improve coordinated action, where professionals concerned with education and AIDS from the UNAIDS Cosponsors, bilateral agencies and civil society share plans for action and their experiences of working with partners in the field. This dynamic and highly active group meets twice a year and supports a range of activities between meetings including research and materials production, advocacy, and technical assistance.

The recent decision by several IATT members to provide core funding in support of joint activities – including the Swedish International Development Agency, the Ford Foundation, and the Canadian International Development Agency – reflects the importance attached to this network. Other members are expressing a likelihood of providing financial support in the coming biennium.

Each Cosponsor of UNAIDS has a duty to ensure that its own house is in order with regard to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. UNESCO takes this responsibility very seriously. We actively participate in the “UN Cares” HIV and AIDS workplace effort, and our personnel are engaged in the country-level training and activities carried out under this common UN initiative. Here in Headquarters, we have revised the workplace policy on HIV and AIDS, and now offer training sessions on HIV and AIDS to all staff. To date, 287 personnel have completed the training. I have strongly encouraged all staff at every level to take part. However, if more progress is not achieved to ensure that UNESCO staff complete this important training, I may decide to make participation mandatory.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The basic message from this overview of UNESCO’s work on HIV and AIDS in the last year is that we are continuing to make important progress.

We are mobilizing more resources, enhancing capacity, and moving forward in close and coordinated fashion with key partners – all with the aim of strengthening the impact of actions at the country level, and as a complement to our wider collective effort to achieve Education for All.

Particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where AIDS continues to take a very heavy toll, we have intensified and prioritised our efforts, while also striving to work with country partners to keep the epidemic from spreading in areas where HIV prevalence is still relatively low.

At the global level, too, increased political commitment and leadership on AIDS is greatly enhancing our potential to act. In June 2006, the UN General Assembly adopted a new Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS in which world leaders committed to work together towards the provision of universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support programmes by 2010, an effort strongly supported by recent G8 pledges. This is a critical step towards halting the epidemic by 2015, as set out in the Millennium Declaration.

In the quarter century since the emergence of AIDS, we have learned what needs to be done to get ahead of the epidemic, but also that doing so requires unwavering determination and a strong will over the long term, drawing on the strengths and contributions of all. I welcome your continued collaboration in this effort.

Unfortunately, other commitments prevent me from staying for the rest of this morning's meeting. Mr Mark Richmond, the UNESCO Global Coordinator for HIV and AIDS and Director of the Division for the Coordination of UN Priorities in Education, will therefore chair your discussions.

Mr Richmond will first provide a programmatic overview of UNESCO's work across all of its Sectors. He will also give a brief update on the work of our Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS Prevention Education, Cristina Owen-Jones, who unfortunately is unable to join us today due to prior engagements. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the important efforts made by Lady Owen-Jones in support of UNESCO's work on HIV and AIDS, and express my gratitude for her contribution.

After hearing from Mr Richmond, you will then have a field perspective provided by Mr Lethola Mafisa, the Country Coordinator for EDUCAIDS at the Ministry of Education in Lesotho. The concluding presentation will be from Mr As Sy Elhadj, Director of Communications and External Relations at the UNAIDS Secretariat in Geneva.



Let me take this opportunity to offer a warm welcome to our two guests and to thank them for being with us here today.

I wish you all a very fruitful discussion.

Thank you.