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First Lady's Meeting

Talking Points for First Lady's Meeting on AIDS in Africa

AIDS in Africa is a crisis of biblical proportion. Each and every day – AIDS claims the lives of more than 5,500 African men, women, and children – and in the next few years, that number will more than double. And yet the epidemic rages on. In fact, while we are here today – nearly 1,000 in Africa will become HIV-infected – half of whom will be under than age of 25.

What we see in Africa today – we are likely to see in India and in the Newly Independent States tomorrow, if serious action is not taken now. By 2005, more than 100 million will have been infected with HIV.

AIDS is a humanitarian health emergency unlike anything we have seen in our lifetime. It is an economic issue, a security issue, a civil society issue, and a key development issue. AIDS in Africa is rolling back decades of progress on development benchmarks from infant mortality to life expectancy.

It is important for us to keep in mind that when we talk about the need to increase access to education for girls and to alleviate poverty among women in the developing world –we remember the link between this basic vulnerability and the risk of HIV. Poor women and children with no options or choices are in the center of the storm of this burgeoning pandemic. And when we talk about increasing trade with Africa, we must remember that AIDS is striking down workers and consumers and driving up the cost of doing business.

But amidst the tragedy we find signs of hope and opportunity. Across the African continent and around world, valiant efforts are being made to stem the rising tide of infection and to care for the growing number of people who are sick.

[First Ladies experiences with model efforts in Uganda and Thailand].

But overall, we are losing this war – and more, much more needs to be done.

On July 19th, the Administration launched a new initiative which is designed to enhance our leadership and investment in the global battle against AIDS. A centerpiece of this effort is an initial downpayment of an additional of \$100 million. This new investment will enable us to more than double our efforts in sub-Saharan Africa by focusing on four main objectives:

- prevention;
- basic care and treatment;
- caring for children orphaned by AIDS; and
- developing essential public health infrastructure and service delivery capacity.

But the US government cannot and should not do this alone. It is for this reason, that we seek to help galvanize action by other essential stakeholders. It is in this spirit of

cooperation that we have gathered here this morning. It is my hope that today, we can continue to build the momentum to win this war. I hope to spend our time and energy not only talking about the need for resources but also on promoting leadership, establishing priorities, and identifying effective public/private partnerships.

We are pleased to joined this morning by:

- leaders in the Administration
 - Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala
 - Secretary of the Treasury, Larry Summers
 - USAID Administrator, Brady Anderson
 - Under-Secretary of State, Frank Loy
 - Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs,
Leon Fuerth
 - Director of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy,
Sandy Thurman
- multilateral organizations
 - The World Bank, Jim Wolfenson and Jan Piercy
 - UNAIDS Program Director, Dr. Peter Piot
- foundations who have and can provide leadership and resources when and where government can't or won't – demonstrating effective strategies and paving the way for more comprehensive action
 - Rockefeller Foundation
 - Gates Foundation
 - Open Society Institute
 - MacArthur Foundation
 - Kaiser Family Foundation
- businesses who help us understand that AIDS is an economic and trade issue that affects us all
 - Black Entertainment Television
 - Bristol Myers Squibb
- non-government organizations (AIDS community observers) who remind us that the lives of millions of individuals and families are in our hands – and who have been on the front lines and who more often than not implement the programs we will be discussing
 - National Association of People with AIDS
 - Global AIDS Action Network

HIV/AIDS has no cure and as yet there is no vaccine. We all grapple with the dual nature of current intervention efforts: prevention of new cases by expanding behavior change, and providing care to those already affected by the disease. As we come together from our diverse background – government, global business, foundations, intergovernmental and community-based organizations among others

– we can bring not only our perspectives on these efforts, but also our unique interests, capabilities and expertise. I want to use our meeting to identify roles, define opportunities, and develop new partnerships in the battle against this devastating epidemic.

We are living in wartime and the stakes are high. Tragically, we know the severity of the horror that lies ahead. Fortunately, we also know a great deal about what can be done to protect children and to support families and communities in their battle against AIDS.

But the battle against AIDS has just begun, and the worst is yet to come. We need to continue to promote and reward leadership, and to remove barriers that impede a cooperative multi-sectoral response. We must support the organizations of the United Nations who are fighting the epidemic of the front lines. We need to expand our vision, our capacity, and our resource base – in the face of an ever expanding nightmare that just won't take no for an answer. Living in wartime means pushing forward on several fronts at the same time.

As we seek to keep pace and even gain ground, the magnitude of this challenge looms large. Nevertheless, the faces of the children and families crying out for our help beckon us all to find ways to do better, to be smarter, to move faster, and to develop whatever capacity and partnerships we lack, as we gear up for the long haul.

Onward.

Script:

Location: Roosevelt Room 10:30am September 7, 1999

Press enters

- **Welcome**
- **Opening remarks by the First Lady**, including introductions (see above)

Press departs

- **Introduce Dr. Peter Piot**, Executive Director, Joint UN program on HIV/AIDS in Geneva: For brief overview of epidemic and the specific challenges we face as we move into the next century.
- **Call on Donna Shalala** for her thoughts on where we need to go in the health sector
- **Call on Lawrence Summers** for his thoughts on where we need to go in the international financial sector
- **Call on James Wolfensohn** for his thoughts on directions for the International Financial Institutions
- **Follow on with open discussion with foundations and corporations and others**

Issues -- Incorporating AIDS into specific sector portfolios:

- Prevention activities. Engagement of leadership. Stigma reduction. Education. Mother to child transmission prevention.
 - Care and treatment. Provision of basic medical care., including treatment of TB and other opportunistic infections.
 - Infrastructure development, including financing and debt relief
- **Next Steps**
 1. Foundation meeting called by MacArthur Foundation. Could they take a leadership role with other foundations?
 2. Business Leader's meeting coordinated by VP and Commerce. Could Bristol Myers have a role in helping with pharmaceutical companies?
 3. Could BET help organize a communications forum to discuss increased AIDS activities internationally?

4. Follow on the Cologne Initiative: Demonstration project in Africa on Debt for AIDS prevention activities.
 5. New UN activities
 6. Other (as come up in the open discussion).
- Close.

HIV/AIDS Leadership Meeting

The White House

September 7, 1999 - 10:30 a.m.

Overview and scope of the problem

Brief outline of the Administration's new Global AIDS Initiative

- ***Increasing U.S. Government investment***
 - Prevention
 - Care and treatment
 - Infrastructure/capacity development
 - Care of orphans
- ***Building partnerships***

Open discussion by key stakeholders

- ***Sectors***
- ***Topics***
 - Enhancing and coordinating AIDS efforts
 - Incorporating AIDS into existing portfolios (AIDS as a development issue; AIDS as a business issue; AIDS as an international finance issue)
 - Innovative approaches and partnerships

Next steps