

2 June 2007

Dear G8 Heads of State,

Re: Civil society demands you keep the promise on universal access.

We are writing as campaigners, activists, people living with and affected by HIV & AIDS, and civil society organisations working to fight the AIDS pandemic.

We welcome Germany's commitment to ensure that Africa and the AIDS pandemic are high on the G8 and EU agenda, in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We are particularly heartened by Chancellor Merkel's focus on addressing the feminisation of the pandemic.

As Germany presides over both the G8 and the EU this year, we believe it is a historic opportunity for you to deliver on the 2005 Gleneagles commitment to universal access by 2010. It is two years since the G8 set this ambitious target and we are concerned that the additional funds needed to achieve this goal have not been identified, let alone made available to scale up the world's response against AIDS.

We are gravely concerned that the international community has lost the momentum of the 3 by 5 campaign to rapidly scale up treatment. We welcomed the universal access commitment spearheaded by the G8 in 2005. However with only three years to 2010, the G8 is on the brink of squandering its legacy of having played a leadership role in promoting this bold promise. For example, at the current rate of scale-up, less than half of all people in urgent need of treatment by 2010 will be receiving it. Five million lives stand to be lost¹. Clearly we need to fight together to ensure that "as close as possible" to universal access is not misinterpreted in this way.

In this letter we outline our main reasons for concern and make specific demands to be met before the end of 2007.

1. UNAIDS estimates that the global AIDS response needs \$20-23 billion per annum, but on current commitments we are \$8 billion short in 2007 and \$10 billion short annually from 2008-2010. G8 leaders should deliver a funding plan for universal access by 2010. This should include specific resource commitments based on fair share contributions and ensure additional, predictable and sustainable AIDS funding to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and other donor mechanisms. Further, the G8 should use their influence with African heads of state to encourage them to live up to their own target of 15% national budget allocation to health as laid out in the 2001 Abuja Declaration.
2. Only a few countries have submitted costed national plans for achieving universal access. This was the first step of the universal access process, and already leaders are faltering. In many of the countries we write from there are either no plans for universal access - where they exist they often lack quality, transparency, and engagement of civil society. We request that G8 leaders help in getting costed national plans drafted more quickly, with better quality, and greater engagement of civil society.

¹ Towards Universal Access, Progress Report April 2007, by WHO/UNAIDS/UNICEF
http://www.who.int/hiv/mediacentre/universal_access_progress_report_en.pdf

3. As leaders in the international response to AIDS, the G8 needs to put clear global targets to the universal access goals. Civil society across the world also urgently requires these targets for measuring your success and ours. Please state your global targets for providing universal access to treatment, care, prevention and support. These should include a pledge to provide treatment to 9.8 million people by 2010.
4. Implementation and delivery are not keeping up with need, and so we ask the G8 to put in place a permanent mechanism to monitor and review progress on AIDS commitments. This is particularly necessary in relation to international efforts for universal access to AIDS treatment, care and prevention.
5. As heads of state of the most powerful economic nations, we want you to encourage the use of flexibilities in the WTO TRIPS agreement in a manner supportive of public health and to refrain from including provisions that go beyond TRIPS in bilateral and regional trade agreements. We request that additional funding is committed to the WHO in order for them to take the necessary lead in developing a robust plan on access to essential second-line antiretroviral drugs in collaboration with its partners.

The lives of millions depend on our joint efforts to make universal access a reality. Your commitment and leadership can help ensure that we keep the promise on universal access by 2010.

Yours sincerely,

[Add signatories in alphabetical order...]