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JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS

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**1ST "STOP CERVICAL CANCER IN AFRICA: ACCELERATING
ACCESS TO HPV VACCINES" MEETING
ABUJA, NIGERIA, 24th – 25th JULY 2007.**

H.R.H Princess Nikki Onyeri, Members of the African Organizing Committee, and participants,

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS recognizes the importance of accelerating access to HPV vaccines to stop Cervical Cancer, and wishes to use this opportunity to thank the Princess Nikky Breast Cancer Foundation for its excellent initiative in bringing all stakeholders together to discuss this issue.

UNAIDS appreciates and acknowledges:

- the key role that the foundation is playing in this initiative and ensuring achievement of the goals and targets in Africa;
- the opportunity given to African health professionals and advocates in building awareness and understanding of HPV vaccines;
- the substantial influence of the programmes of the First Ladies Network at the sub regional level and their potential to make a real difference in the lives of African Women.

CHALLENGES AND AREAS NEEDING SUPPORT

UNAIDS calls on the delegates to:

- commit to concrete steps to advance toward country-wide access to the HPV vaccine;
- disseminate evidence-informed messages to raise awareness of HPV infection, its link to cervical cancer, and the role of HPV vaccination as an effective mode of risk-reduction;
- discuss mechanisms for assuring an affordable and reliable supply of vaccine and sustainable funding sources;
- advocate for research to improve effectiveness and cost of delivery models.

We applaud your initiative in bringing together such a great diversity of stakeholders to enhance current commitment and address persistent challenges to the prevention of cervical cancer with the HPV vaccine. HPV is a particular concern for women living with HIV because of the potential for progression of infection to cervical cancer which responds less well to treatment. We are confident that your meeting will enhance awareness of the importance of HPV vaccination, advocacy for its affordable and accessible provision, and support from governments for innovative and effective programs to bring this vaccine to the women of our communities. The results of your collaboration during these two days will surely enhance the local, regional, and national response to a now nearly preventable disease.

Best wishes for the success of this very important meeting!

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