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UN welcomes launch of business initiatives to end HIV among children by 2015



UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé. Photo: UNAIDS/B. Hamilton

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The United Nations and the United States Government initiative for AIDS relief (PEPFAR) welcomed today the launch of two programmes by business leaders to end new HIV infections in children by 2015.

“We will not reach our goal of zero new HIV infections among children without the passion and determination of the world’s business leaders,” the Executive Director of the Joint UN

Programme on HIV/AIDS ([UNAIDS](#)), Michel Sidibé, [said](#) as the initiatives were presented at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

“The private sector not only brings financial resources, but also their expertise in management, marketing and connecting with people at the grassroots,” he said.

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The Business Leadership Council and the Social Media Syndicate initiatives will both work towards the same goal, but will use different means to do so.

The Business Leadership Council will focus on eliminating new HIV infections among children in 22 countries – mostly in sub-Saharan Africa – and on keeping their mothers alive.

Meanwhile, the Social Media Syndicate will focus on raising awareness on HIV/AIDS and generating political will by coordinating with the most influential, individual publishers online to share messages and actions needed to welcome a “Generation Born HIV Free.”

“I commend these business leaders for their commitment and partnership,” said the Global AIDS Coordinator for the US, Eric Goosby. “The launch of the Business Leadership Council and the Social Media Syndicate is a clear sign that the private sector is ready to step up.”

According to UNAIDS, an estimated 390,000 children were newly infected with HIV in 2010. Most of the new HIV infections were in low- and middle-income countries. In high-income countries, the number was close to zero. The cost of protecting a child from HIV can be as little as \$300 and saves at least three times more in health care costs alone for a child living with HIV.

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