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FORMER UN MESSENGER OF PEACE TO FIGHT TUBERCULOSIS AS A STOP TB AMBASSADOR

Geneva -- Anna Cataldi, who served as UN Messenger of Peace from 1998 to 2007, has joined the global fight against tuberculosis (TB). Ms Cataldi, who was today appointed as an Ambassador of the Stop TB Partnership, will raise awareness worldwide about the unfair burden of TB on refugees, migrants, people living in poverty and other disadvantaged groups.

"I am grateful to the Stop TB Partnership for giving me this opportunity to advocate on behalf of those suffering from this disease," Ms Cataldi said.

Welcoming the announcement, former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan praised Anna Cataldi for her tireless efforts and devotion. "She was an active, compassionate and productive Messenger. She travelled to difficult places, such as Afghanistan and Somalia, to bring support, encouragement and hope to the desperate and voiceless. I am delighted she will now devote her energies to the Stop TB campaign," he said.

The Stop TB Partnership, whose secretariat is hosted by the World Health Organization (WHO), is a network of more than 500 international organizations, countries, donors from the public and private sectors, TB patients and nongovernmental and governmental organizations. The Partnership's goal is to eliminate TB as a public health problem worldwide.

In 2005 there were 8.8 million new cases of TB. The disease kills 4400 people every day, even though it has been treatable and preventable for more than half a century.

"Anna Cataldi has an extraordinary track record of galvanizing people to confront issues that cause human suffering," said Dr Marcos Espinal, Executive Secretary of the Stop TB Partnership. "She will be a strong voice calling for access to TB prevention, diagnosis and treatment as a human right."

The Stop TB Partnership has set out an ambitious plan: The Global Plan to Stop TB (2006-2015). Launched by the Stop TB Partnership in January 2006, the plan is a roadmap for treating 50 million people for TB between now and 2015 and save about 14 million lives. It aims to halve TB prevalence and deaths compared with 1990 levels by 2015.

"Ms Cataldi is sure to advance the global fight against TB. We welcome her appointment enthusiastically," said Dr Mario Raviglione, Director of the Stop TB Department at WHO.

Ms Cataldi, who is from Italy, is the author of *Letters from Sarajevo*, which chronicled the impact of war on Bosnia's children. In 1998, to mark the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of

Human Rights, she initiated a project to create and distribute a passport-sized pamphlet version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for children. In March 2007, she conceived and help organize a photo exhibit focussing on TB at UN Headquarters that was viewed by more than 100 000 people.

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