Ten Points on AIDS for World AIDS Day

1. AIDS is a new worldwide problem.
   Over 150,000 cases of AIDS have been reported from more than 145 countries around the world. All communities can be affected by AIDS because the human immunodeficiency virus, HIV, that can cause AIDS can cross all boundaries, geographical and social. Worldwide, an estimated 5 to 10 million people are already infected with HIV.

2. We know how HIV spreads.
   Fortunately, HIV can only be spread in three ways:
   * sexual intercourse
   * blood
   * from infected mother-to-infant.

3. To know how HIV spreads is to know how to prevent infection.
   HIV can be spread by sexual intercourse – from man to woman, from woman to man and from man to man. HIV can also be spread through blood in two major ways: by receiving a transfusion of contaminated blood; or if needles or other skin-piercing instruments are used more than once without being properly cleaned and sterilized after each use. Finally, HIV can spread from infected mothers to their infants, either before, during, or after birth.

4. The sexual spread of HIV can be prevented.
   The most effective means of preventing the sexual spread of HIV is by remaining with a faithful, uninfected partner or not having sexual intercourse at all. Otherwise, a person should reduce their number of sexual partners as much as possible. People should avoid sexual intercourse with prostitutes or other people who have many sexual partners. Whenever having sexual intercourse with someone who might possibly be infected with HIV, a condom should be used – properly – from start to finish.

5. Infection through blood can be stopped in a variety of ways.
   Fortunately, blood for transfusion can be tested for infection with HIV and discarded if contaminated. Needles and other skin-piercing instruments can be sterilized after each use. Drug users can – and should – stop injecting drugs; if they continue, they should use only sterile needles and not share them with anyone.

6. It is important to know how HIV is NOT spread.
   HIV is NOT spread by casual contact at work or school, shaking hands, touching or hugging. It is NOT spread through food or water, by sharing cups or glasses, by sneezing or coughing, by insects, in swimming pools or on toilets. Knowing how HIV is NOT spread helps people understand that there is no danger of becoming infected from casual contact.

7. AIDS affects us all.
   There is no reason to fear people who are HIV-infected or have AIDS. They should not be discriminated against. They need our support to help them with the physical and emotional difficulties they face.

8. Information and education are vital.
   Some day, medical research may give us a drug to cure AIDS or a vaccine to prevent AIDS. Until then, we must rely on changes in personal behaviour to prevent the spread of HIV. Information and education are therefore vital in the fight against AIDS.

9. A global mobilization for a global threat.
   National AIDS programmes already exist in nearly all countries of the world. These programmes inform and educate people about AIDS, how to avoid becoming infected and how to protect others. National AIDS programmes are linked through the Global Programme on AIDS of the World Health Organization, which directs and coordinates the Global AIDS Strategy. Because AIDS is a global problem, it can only be stopped in one country if it is stopped in all countries.

10. Together, we can stop AIDS.
    You can contribute to stopping AIDS, by making sure that you understand the facts about AIDS and helping others to do the same. The risk of AIDS is not about who you are or where you are. It is about what you do. We now have the opportunity to talk about AIDS, to learn, to teach and to speak out. Join the worldwide effort to stop AIDS.

AIDS
A worldwide effort will stop it