

PRIVATE SECTOR DECLARATION AGAINST HIV/AIDS BANGKOK, JULY 2004

HIV/AIDS poses one of the most serious challenges to global economic progress and social stability in modern times

HIV/AIDS is a major public health and development crisis, with profound implications for nations rich and poor. Businesses are not immune to the effects of HIV/AIDS. Businesses are a key institution in society, and businesses can not separate their own interests from those of the societies in which they function. Businesses are made up of people who are indirectly or directly affected by HIV/AIDS. On a personal level, HIV/AIDS may affect friends, family, colleagues and communities. Economically, HIV/AIDS hampers the ability of people to work and prosper and reduces the wealth of affected countries thereby slowing market growth; it reduces profitability by driving up costs and limiting investment opportunities. Operationally, it impairs companies' ability to operate and diminishes human capital. Globally, HIV/AIDS may jeopardize security and stability.

These effects will only continue in a vicious cycle of greater impoverishment and illness unless decisive action is taken, led by governments and the international aid community and actively supported by business.

Companies have a unique and vital role in supporting the global fight against HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria

Corporate activity must extend beyond the traditional horizons of the local community to build partnerships with other stakeholders. Achieving necessary scale from the myriad encouraging cases will require expanded commitment to partnership, sustainability, capacity building and an unprecedented commitment by all stakeholders. As part of a global mobilisation, companies should increase their efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS and TB. Beyond their own activities, companies should seek innovative partnerships between industry, government and NGOs. Efforts need to be part of a broad, coordinated approach and must be supported by sound public policy, strong political leadership and a commitment to good governance.

There are specific ways in which companies can make a difference to their business, the communities they work in and to the global situation. The role of companies should be multifaceted. There is a range of activities – including workplace programmes, community assistance programmes, corporate advocacy, national and global education efforts, in-kind donations and directed financial support – that should be considered in developing a comprehensive corporate approach.

Therefore, the global business community commits that:

Companies shall increase their commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS:

- CEOs and business leaders should make the fight against HIV/AIDS a business and policy priority for their organizations and develop a strategic vision of what impact their company individually and the private sector collectively will make, in cooperation with government and other stakeholders.

Companies should take practical steps to contribute to the prevention, treatment, care and support of HIV/AIDS and TB and towards mitigating the impact of these diseases in their communities. They should do this by efforts that target:

- **The workplace** - Companies need to begin by reviewing established workplace policy and programmes to consider practical ways to extend them to address HIV/AIDS. Key policy and programmatic elements include:
 - People living with HIV/ AIDS are given the same rights, benefits and opportunities as people living with other life-threatening conditions.
 - HIV/AIDS-related policies and practices are communicated to employees and customers in simple and unambiguous terms.
 - Education and communication programmes are developed for the benefit of all employees, covering the risks of and the preventive measures relevant to the spread of HIV/AIDS. These will be managed in collaboration with the wider community and other stakeholders.
 - Information on voluntary and confidential testing for HIV/AIDS is available to all employees, and that there is access to available medical schemes for management of HIV/AIDS.
 - Confidentiality of all medical information, including HIV/AIDS status will be maintained. Employees are not obliged to inform potential or current employers about their HIV/AIDS status.
 - Workers affected or perceived to be affected by HIV/AIDS will be protected from stigmatisation and discrimination by co-workers.
- **The community** - Companies should look at enhancing their relationships with local communities and at expanding activities to include developing and sharing best practices throughout their spheres of influence, actively advocating for action and using strategic philanthropy.
- **Their national environments** - Companies should seek opportunities to be active at the national level to support and strengthen national programmes and strategies.
- **The international community** - Companies should be advocates at the global level for greater international involvement.

Partnerships increase the impact and sustainability of efforts against HIV/AIDS.

Governments, international organizations, community groups, academic and professional institutions, the private sector and NGOs all bring skills and experience. Partnerships are the best way to facilitate the transfer of useful knowledge and practice.

- Companies should participate in the collective sharing of national and regional experiences in order to leverage the substantial experience that has been established.
- Companies should be active advocates to encourage others to increase their contributions to the fight against HIV/AIDS and TB.

We, the representatives of the global business community, are committed to the adoption and implementation of these recommendations.

Asian Business Coalition on AIDS, Thailand
Botswana Business Coalition on AIDS
Business Coalition on Aids in Singapore
China Business and AIDS Working Group
Confederation of Indian Industry
Conselho Empresarial Nacional de Prevenção ao HIV/AIDS, Brazil
Corporate Council on Africa, USA
Ethiopian Employers Federation
Fórum Empresários Contra o SIDA, Mozambique
Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, USA
HIV/AIDS Business Coalition Tanzania
International Business Leaders Forum, United Kingdom
Kenya HIV/AIDS Business Council
Malawi Business Coalition against AIDS
Myanmar Business Coalition on AIDS
National Business Alliance on AIDS, Indonesia
Namibia Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS
Nigerian Business Coalition against AIDS
The Private Enterprise Foundation, Ghana
Private Sector Coalition against AIDS in Lesotho
Private Sector Coordinating Entity to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, Uganda
South African Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS
Swaziland Business Coalition against HIV/AIDS
Thailand Business Coalition on AIDS
Uganda Business Coalition on AIDS
World Economic Forum, Switzerland
Zambia Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS
Zimbabwe Business Council on HIV/AIDS