



Tuesday, 1 December 2009

PRESS RELEASE

World AIDS Day

**ACP-EU Co-Presidents call for reasonable
access to anti-retroviral drugs**

Directorate-General for Communication
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

HIV/AIDS

Declaration: 01.12.2009

ACP-EU Co-Presidents call for reasonable access to anti-retroviral drugs

On World Aids Day, the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, Louis Michel (Belgium) and Wilkie Rasmussen (Cook Islands), called for HIV/AIDS infected people to be given access to reasonably priced anti-retroviral drugs. There are currently 33 million people worldwide living with the virus.

"The ACP countries believe there is still much that can be done by the big international pharmaceutical companies in developed countries to facilitate the provision of less expensive generic versions of anti-retroviral drugs to HIV/AIDS infected people in developing countries", said Mr Rasmussen.

The feminization of the pandemic, and the increasing number of widows, orphans and child-headed households in ACP States, adds a new dimension to this problem, along with accompanying serious social, legal, ethical and economic challenges, he mentioned.

According to Louis Michel, "we must not lose hope". Since 2001, the number of new infections in Sub-Saharan Africa has dropped by almost 15% and those infected have a greater life expectancy, he remarked. According to the Co-President of the ACP-EU, this demonstrates the efficiency of prevention campaigns and retroviral treatments, which have helped to save 3 million lives since 1996.

HIV/AIDS is making it more difficult for countries to achieve their development goals. Therefore, "we must not relent in our prevention efforts" to assure treatment within a reasonable timeframe and at a reasonable price, said the Co-President.

The members of the European Parliament and their ACP counterparts respected a minute of silence in memory of the victims of this pandemic.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp/60_18/default_en.htm

Link to website of the ACP/EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

Further information:

Isabel Teixeira Nadkarni

Press Service

Luanda, Republic of Angola

Mobile: 00 244 935 73 50 78

Mobile: +32 498 98 33 36

e-mail: isabel.nadkarni@europarl.europa.eu