



World Organization
of the Scout Movement
Organisation Mondiale
du Mouvement Scout

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CIRCULAR

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To: International Commissioners

Dear Colleagues,

STATEMENT FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF "BIG 7" YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS ON HIV/AIDS

As I am sure you know, World AIDS Day was marked on 1 December 2001.

On that occasion, the Chief Executive Officers of the "Big 7" International Youth Organizations (WOSM, WAGGGS, YMCA, YWCA, IFRC, IAA and IYF) jointly signed a statement together with Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS. This statement, a copy of which is attached for your information, was distributed worldwide in UNAIDS' publicity package to mark World AIDS Day.

I invite you to make this statement known within your own Association and to use it as you feel is appropriate. Your national counterparts from the "Big 7" International Youth Organizations will also have received the same text; you may be able to work together at national level to spread this message concerning the impact of HIV/AIDS on young people.

Yours sincerely,

Jacques Moreillon
Secretary General

Creating opportunities
with young people

Crear posibilidades con
la juventud

Ouvrir des voies nouvelles
avec les jeunes

إتاحة الفرص بالتعاون مع الشباب

100 million young people care... do you?

Young people are at the centre of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. An estimated 11.8 million people aged between 15 and 24 are living with HIV/AIDS, and half of all new infections – almost 7000 daily – are occurring among young people. Young people are particularly susceptible to HIV infection and they also carry the burden of caring for family members living with HIV/AIDS. Around the world, AIDS is shattering young people's opportunities for healthy adult lives. Nevertheless it is young people who offer the greatest hope for changing the course of the epidemic.

The Chief Executives of the seven largest international youth organizations, representing almost 100 million young people in the world, want to help those who are infected with HIV and stop more becoming affected by AIDS.

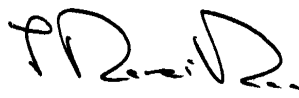
- Young people must be given access to information, health services and appropriate care and support.
- Young people should be involved in all decision-making and policy processes that determine the information and services provided for them. Experiences show that HIV/AIDS programmes that respect and involve young people, while being sensitive to their cultures, are more likely to succeed.
- Young people need a safe and supportive environment in which to develop. This requires sensitive attitudes, policies and legislation at family, community and national levels. Youth organizations provide a supportive environment in which young people establish their own values based on peer education and experiential learning. In youth organizations young people can develop a personal set of values for responsible behaviour.
- Youth organizations play a vital role in encouraging peer group learning and providing a space for personal development and life skills training, which contribute to the general well being of adolescents.
- Whatever environment in which they live, all young people have the same basic needs; the ability to cope and the ability to control their own development as individuals so that they become autonomous, supportive, responsible and committed.
- Young people are not problems to be solved, they are not waiting to become adults - they are citizens with the capacity to influence positive change.

UNAIDS endorses the work of the seven largest international youth organizations in their efforts to empower young people. These youth organizations give young people appropriate information, education and opportunities to make responsible decisions about their own lives and they empower young people to participate in decisions about the policies, services, information and education provided to young people to prevent HIV/AIDS.

SIGNED:



Peter Piot
Executive Director
UNAIDS



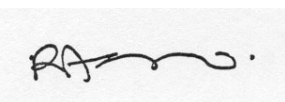
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Rick Little
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