



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 17, 2006

COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD UNITE FOR INTERNATIONAL AIDS CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL

WASHINGTON, DC – Communities in over 100 countries around the world are preparing for the 2006 International AIDS Candlelight Memorial on May 21, a program of the Global Health Council. The Candlelight Memorial is among the largest and oldest grassroots mobilization campaigns for HIV/AIDS awareness in the world.

Now in its 23rd year, the Candlelight has become more than just a memorial to commemorate the lives lost to AIDS. The Candlelight provides opportunities to educate people about HIV/AIDS; inform policymakers about steps to take in stopping the disease; and create community dialogue about prevention, care and treatment. This year's Candlelight also provides an opportunity civil society with a platform to make their voices heard as governments prepare to attend a United Nations review of global AIDS progress at the New York City headquarters later this month.

"I am happy about this program because it gives support to those who could not get it," says Miss HIV Stigma Free of Botswana Cynthia Leshomo, an activist and coordinator of the memorial in her country. In Botswana, approximately half of all pregnant women in their mid to late twenties are HIV positive, according to a recent AIDS pandemic update by UNAIDS.

In just three decades, HIV/AIDS has killed more than 25 million people across the globe. Although we know how to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS, five million new infections occur every year, and there is still no cure.

Memorials are planned in every region of the world and led by more than 800 volunteer community coordinators working with the Global Health Council to commemorate the day.

"Stopping HIV/AIDS cannot be left in the hands of government officials and health care professionals alone," said Dr. Nils Daulaire, president of the Global Health Council. "Saving lives and keeping communities healthy demands the involvement of concerned global citizens no matter where they live in the world."

An online, electronic candlelight campaign and a postcard campaign urging President Bush to double spending on the global AIDS pandemic also are part of the Candlelight Memorial activities sponsored by the Global Health Council.

To learn more about the International AIDS Candlelight Memorial and how to get involved, visit www.candlelightmemorial.org. Descriptions of several Candlelight programs around the world are available in our [media advisory](#).

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The Global Health Council is the world's largest membership alliance dedicated to saving lives by improving health throughout the world. The Council serves and represents thousands of public health professionals from over 100 countries on six continents. www.globalhealth.org