



## **South Africans urged to take responsibility for their health as World AIDS Day turns 21**

On this year's World AIDS Day, the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) will send a strong message to all South Africans to take personal responsibility in overcoming HIV and AIDS. The national theme for this year's WAD, to be commemorated on 1 December, is: "I am responsible. We are responsible. South Africa is taking responsibility."

Through a multi-sectoral approach, being coordinated by SANAC, the country's leadership is working to accelerate the national response in order to meet the targets of the National Strategic Plan on HIV and AIDS and STIs (NSP). The two main objectives of this plan are:

- to halve the rate of new HIV infections by 2011, and
- to ensure that 80% of people living with HIV and AIDS in South Africa have access to treatment by 2011.

"World AIDS Day 2009 heralds a new era in the country's collective effort in the response to HIV and AIDS. The theme encourages everyone in South Africa - individuals, communities, businesses and government - to take personal and collective responsibility to stop new HIV infections, to provide care and support to those living with HIV and to ensure access to treatment for all people in need," says Mark Heywood, Deputy Chairperson of SANAC.

WAD 2009 campaign will send a bold and clear message that the government, civil society and the private sector are united in their commitment to the NSP.

"We will mobilise all South Africans to acknowledge their role and responsibility in the spread of the virus, with the guidance and encouragement of key political and social leaders," concludes Heywood. "We want everyone to know their HIV and TB status. And we want 1 December to mark the beginning of a drive on the part of all South Africans to take action to safeguard their health and the health of the nation."

ENDS.

For more information please contact:

Junaid Seedat

Manager: Communication, Advocacy and Campaigns

SANAC

011 655 7342

[junaid@sanac.org.za](mailto:junaid@sanac.org.za)