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PRIME MINISTER

NEW AUSTRALIAN AID FOR HIV/AIDS PROJECTS IN AFRICA

In the Commonwealth Action Program issued after today's CHOGM retreat at Queenstown, Commonwealth Leaders noted the threat which HIV/AIDS poses to large parts of the younger population of many Commonwealth countries and urged that further resources be committed to combating its spread.

During this discussion, which I introduced, I announced an additional Australian Aid Program of \$10 million over four years for HIV/AIDS care and prevention in Africa.

This funding is additional to the \$7.8 million currently being spent on ten HIV/AIDS prevention and care projects in southern and eastern Africa.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is having a devastating human, social and economic impact on Africa, which now has 70 per cent of the world's AIDS cases. In Zimbabwe alone, the Health Minister estimates that 100,000 people will die of AIDS over the next 18 months.

International assistance and cooperation is an integral part of Australia's national HIV/AIDS strategy. We believe that Australia's experience and expertise, especially in AIDS education strategies can usefully be shared with other countries.

Like existing Australian aid projects for HIV/AIDS care and prevention, the new funding I have announced will be channelled through international organisations, Australian NGOs and indigenous groups.

The additional resources will enable Australia to fund UNICEF initiatives in this area in South Africa and Kenya in addition to our support for current projects in Zimbabwe, Malawi and Namibia.

They will also enable the continuation of core funding to the Southern African Network of AIDS Organisations (SANASO), which links 100 NGO and community organisations involved in HIV/AIDS prevention and care.

Australian aid expenditure on HIV/AIDS projects to the end of 1995/96 is estimated at \$53 million.

AUCKLAND

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