



## **World AIDS Day 2003 Marks a "Turning Point" in Pandemic, Powell Says**

### **New U.S. plan, international momentum will work to turn the tide**



*Secretary of State Colin Powell speaks at the United Nations General Assembly meeting on HIV/AIDS. (©AP/WWP)*

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell predicts that U.S. and international efforts to deal with HIV/AIDS will bring "a turning point" in the campaign to stop the spread of the deadly viral disease. Powell issued the message November 25 to coincide with World AIDS Day, which will be recognized December 1.

"Never has there been a greater international effort at all levels of government and across all sectors of society to turn the tide of AIDS," Powell said.

Powell called for the commitment and support of governments, executives, religious leaders and community representatives in the struggle to end stigmatization and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS. He also urged continued support for the allocation of resources to help those in need.

Powell said the five-year, \$15 billion U.S. Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief is intended to prevent 7 million new infections, provide medicines to 2 million people living with HIV/AIDS and care for 10 million infected individuals and AIDS orphans.

Following is the text of the Powell statement:

### **World AIDS Day 2003**

Secretary Colin L. Powell  
Washington, DC  
November 25, 2003

The people and government of the United States join you in commemorating World AIDS Day 2003. With you, we renew our commitment to combat this terrible disease that can rob hope from millions on every continent.

In the year since we last marked World AIDS Day, 5 million more people across the globe have become infected with HIV. Three million more have died, including 500,000 children. Each death represents a personal tragedy -- the loss of a mother, father, sister, brother, son, daughter, loved one. Each death also is an irreparable loss to our international community.

Though the challenge remains enormous, World AIDS Day 2003 promises to be a turning point in the spread of this cruel pandemic. Never has there been a greater international effort at all levels of government and across all sectors of society to turn the tide of AIDS.

The United States is proud to be a leader in this worldwide effort. As President Bush has said, we have the power and the moral duty to help, and that is exactly what we are doing.

In the past year, President Bush launched the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and he did it with the overwhelming support of the United States Congress and the American people. This five-year, 15 billion dollar plan nearly triples current U.S. Government spending on HIV/AIDS. Indeed, the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief constitutes the largest commitment of funds in history by a single nation to an international public health initiative.

The Plan will prevent 7 million new HIV infections, provide medicines to 2 million people living with HIV/AIDS, and care for 10 million infected individuals and AIDS orphans. Under the Plan, United States' support to the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria will increase and our bilateral assistance will continue to some 75 countries around the world.

Of course, governments alone cannot begin to address the global AIDS crisis. Turning the tide of AIDS will require the continued, committed and cooperative efforts of nations and non-governmental organizations working together.

Ignorance, stigma and silence kill. Government officials, corporate executives, religious leaders and community representatives must work together to disseminate life-saving information. All of us must speak out against stigmatizing those living with HIV/AIDS. All of us must send the message far and wide that those infected should be treated with compassion, not cruelty, with dignity, not discrimination.

And all of us must do our part to ensure that resources are allocated to combating HIV/AIDS and that the resources reach those in need.

Responding to HIV/AIDS is not only a compelling humanitarian and a public health issue. HIV/AIDS carries profound implications for prosperity, good governance and stability.

Left to ravage, the disease decimates a society's most productive members. It sickens those between the ages of 15 and 24, those who take care of the very young and the very old. It destroys those who teach and trade, support their families and otherwise contribute to their nation's development. AIDS saps global growth. Unchecked, AIDS can lay waste to whole countries and destabilize entire regions of the world.

In the worldwide fight against AIDS, every nation, large or small, developed or developing, must be a leader. And in the fight against AIDS, all countries have a strong and committed ally in the United States of America.

Together, we can be partners in hope. Together, we can turn the tide of AIDS.