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To Minister DFAT/People/DFATL

CC

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Subject AFAO media release commending AusAID/Clinton Foundation MoU and Asia Pac Business Coailtion for

HIV/AIDS

Topic

TRIM File Ref

#### Dear Minister Downer

Congrautlations on the launch this morning and on the two initiatives announced today. As you remarked at the launch "today represent an unprecedented acceleration" of Australia's response to HIV in the region.

The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) is very pleased with these developments and we have issued the attached media release expressing our strong support and commendation for your leadership in the response to HIV in the region and for AusAID's more strategic and dynamic approach.

## Best regards

Don Baxter **Don Baxter** 

**Executive Director** 

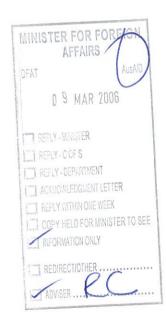
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AusAID-Clinton MoU & Business Coalition - AFAO release (22 Feb 06).doc

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### Media Release

Embargoed until 1p.m., Wednesday 22 Feb 2006

# National AIDS body welcomes AusAID initiatives for HIV/AIDS

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The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) welcomes today's announcement of the establishment of the Asia Pacific Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS and Foreign Minister Downer's co-signing with President Bill Clinton of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between AusAID and the William J. Clinton Foundation, aimed at improving HIV treatments access in the Asia Pacific region.

"The Clinton Foundation has been instrumental in negotiating much-reduced prices for both HIV drugs and associated diagnostic tests", said Mr Ian Rankin, National President of AFAO.

"As a HTV-positive person I know how important these are for our colleagues with HIV in Asian and Pacific countries and particularly urgently required in Papua New Guinea," he said

"We commend Minister Downer's long-standing and intensifying commitment to combating the HIV epidemic in the Asia-Pacific region", said Mr Rankin.

"The two initiatives announced today confirm AusAID's shift to a more strategic, systemic and effective approach to responding to the HIV epidemics in the region. This enhanced approach has been increasingly evident since Mr Downer's establishment of an Australian HIV ambassador position in 2004 and the appointment of Annmaree O'Keeffe to the position", Mr Rankin said.

Mr Rankin pointed out that AFAO and its member organisations are playing increasing roles in the region, focusing on HIV prevention, treatments access, policy development and advocacy and community mobilisation in the face of emerging epidemics.

"We look forward to working with the Asia Pacific Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, the Lowy Institute for International Policy and the Clinton Foundation in strengthening the community response and improving access to treatment, care and prevention services", Mr Rankin said.

[The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) is the peak national federation for the HIV community-based response, providing national leadership, co-ordination and support to the national and regional policy, advocacy and health promotion response to HIV/AIDS.]

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