



OVERVIEW

The **Public Broadcasters Global Media Summit on HIV/AIDS** builds on the momentum generated by a meeting at the United Nations in January 2004, where Secretary General Kofi Annan called on the world's leading media companies to contribute their resources and expertise to respond to the growing HIV/AIDS pandemic. In response to that call to action, the Independent Television Service (ITVS), the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and the Kaiser Family Foundation are organizing the first-ever Public Broadcasters Global Media Summit on HIV/AIDS. The Summit will convene the world's top public broadcasting executives in San Francisco on May 2, 2005, in conjunction with the annual INPUT conference. The broadcasters will explore the specific ways in which their organizations can leverage their unique communication power to promote awareness and help slow the spread of the pandemic and improve the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS.

The mass media have a pivotal role to play in the fight against HIV/AIDS. It is often said that education is the ultimate vaccine against HIV. More than twenty years since the virus was first detected, public understanding of how HIV/AIDS is prevented and treated is mixed, and basic awareness of the pandemic and its impact is severely lacking in many parts of the world, particularly among women and youth. With its wide-reaching global infrastructure and communications expertise, the media's ability to change the course of this pandemic is unparalleled. Many media organizations are rising to the challenge by promoting awareness of HIV/AIDS and educating listeners and viewers about the facts of the pandemic.

Since that initial meeting at the UN, there has been considerable activity around the world by many present that day. This includes national and regional-level leadership events in Moscow and Delhi as well as major new and expanded public education initiatives. The key to the success of these efforts – and others like them that are beginning to develop around the globe – is the support that is provided at the highest possible levels.

Participants in the Summit will engage in an open dialogue with leaders in the field of HIV/AIDS about what they can collectively contribute to help raise global awareness of the pandemic and stop its spread in their own countries. Public broadcasters will be able to share past experiences and ongoing initiatives as well as strategize new opportunities to extend the reach of communication about HIV/AIDS. All participants will be asked to sign a statement of support, pledging their personal commitment to addressing the pandemic through their companies' resources.

