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## **Zonta International Resolution to Promote the Awareness, Prevention and Treatment of HIV/AIDS**

As of 2002, the World Health Organization estimates that almost 8,000 adults and children die each day of HIV/AIDS and 42 million adults and children worldwide are living with HIV/AIDS. Almost fifty percent of people living with HIV/AIDS are women and girls.

AIDS is a leading cause of death in Sub-Saharan Africa and the fourth cause of death globally. Fifty-eight percent of persons infected with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa are women.

United Nations Millennium Development Goal Six is “Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.”

Women’s inequality increases their risk of becoming infected with the HIV virus because

- In many societies, women in relationships do not have the power to refuse sex or negotiate protected sex.
- Women who have experienced violence are ten times as likely to be infected as women who have not.
- Forced migration in situations such as trafficking, wars and natural disasters can increase women’s risk for becoming infected.
- Taboos surrounding women’s purity and sexuality discourage open discussion of sexually transmitted diseases and ways to prevent them. Uneducated women have little idea how HIV is transmitted or how transmission can be prevented.
- Infected women are often ostracized by their communities, preventing them from seeking testing and treatment.
- Girls’ disparate access to education may reduce the effectiveness of HIV/AIDS information programs that are provided through schools.
- HIV infection of women in developing countries has a particularly dramatic impact because of women’s critical contributions to the family and community.

**WHEREAS:** Zonta International Objects include “to improve the legal, political, economic, educational, health, and professional status of women” and “to promote justice and universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

***Be it resolved therefore that:***

Zonta International supports the efforts of the United Nations to halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and encourages Zonta Clubs and Zontians to:

1. Inform themselves about HIV/AIDS and its prevention and treatment;

2. Increase awareness of HIV/AIDS and its impact on women in their communities;
3. Advocate for improved programs to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS in their communities;
4. Support efforts to end stigmatization of HIV/AIDS infected persons;
5. In all actions, emphasize the importance of serious efforts to prevent HIV/AIDS.

*Adopted at the 57<sup>th</sup> Zonta International Convention in New York, NY, USA, July 2004*