Peace Corps HIV/AIDS Prevention and Education

The Peace Corps – based on a long history of work in HIV/ AIDS – continues to expand its multi-faceted initiative to address the health, social, and economic issues related to the global HIV/ AIDS epidemic. The initiative includes activities worldwide, but the primary focus is in the most affected areas of Africa, where 2,800 volunteers serve in 24 African nations.

Peace Corps volunteers working in HIV/AIDS education and prevention train youth as peer educators, collaborate with community and religious leaders to develop appropriate education strategies, provide support to children orphaned by HIV/AIDS, and develop programs that provide support to families and communities affected by the disease.

The Peace Corps is committed to addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Highlights of the Peace Corps program include:

- **Intensive Volunteer Training**: All Peace Corps posts in Africa and nearly half the posts in Inter-America, the Pacific, Europe, the Mediterranean, and Asia carry out HIV/AIDS activities. In 2003, 1,494 volunteers conducted 43 health and HIV/AIDS projects worldwide.

- **Expansion of HIV/AIDS Projects in Endemic Areas**: In total, volunteers reach nearly half a million beneficiaries through their HIV/AIDS efforts, and this trend is expected to dramatically increase. In Southern and Eastern Africa, the regions of the continent most severely affected by the epidemic, the Peace Corps will continue to expand HIV/AIDS-specific projects in several countries. Two posts, Botswana and Swaziland, have projects devoted exclusively to HIV/AIDS activities.

- **Development and Implementation of HIV/AIDS Materials**: Volunteers from all sectors have been successful focusing HIV/AIDS prevention and education messages on youth, drawing primarily from the Peace Corps-produced *Life Skills Manual*, which UNESCO has identified as a best practice document in HIV/AIDS education and which has been adopted into some countries’ national curricula.

- **Intensified Information Sharing, Monitoring, and Evaluation**: Through the use of information technology and other strategies, the Peace Corps is enhancing the capability of volunteers and their communities to obtain and exchange information about the best practices and latest innovations in public education, behavior change, and delivery of services to people living with HIV/AIDS.

- **Deployment of New Crisis Corps Volunteers**: The Crisis Corps program, in which former Peace Corps volunteers return to service for a limited period, is committing volunteers to the fight against the epidemic. They lend expertise to nongovernmental organizations and government agencies worldwide.