The GCWA congratulates Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka on her appointment as UN Women Executive Director.

Your Excellence Ms Mlambo-Ngcuka,

The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS (GCWA) wishes to congratulate you on your appointment as the new Executive Director of UN Women.

As a worldwide alliance of civil society groups and the United Nations system, committed to stand up for the needs and rights of women and girls in the AIDS response, the GCWA is excited that you, a highly respected and recognized women’s leader from the global South is now appointed to the highest level of the multilateral system. Your demonstrated commitment to responding to HIV, stopping violence against women and fighting for education for girls bring an extraordinary powerful track record and expertise to this role. Moreover your personal story and success in becoming the first female Deputy President of South Africa is an inspiration to women and girls in Africa and across the globe.

You come to this position when the world is at a cross roads on many of the issues most critical to gender equality and women’s empowerment. The HIV epidemic which devastated more than one generation, most harshly women and girls, is at a tipping point. While access to treatment has increased and numbers of new infections have gone down, young women continued to be severely affected by the epidemic, with one young woman infected with HIV every minute. Furthermore, women within many communities are particular vulnerable to stigma, discrimination and gender-based violence, while those living with HIV find their sexual and reproductive rights being violated.

Data tells us that globally one in three women experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. Gender based violence takes many forms beyond this - from violation of sexual and reproductive rights to child marriage. We have the means to treat the effects of violence against women and to make zero tolerance for gender-based violence a reality. The question is, is the world ready to make it a priority and act now?

The future of global development is being mapped out now in the setting of the post-2015 sustainable development goals. We call on you to leverage UN Women’s political and leadership role to advocate for the rights and wellbeing of women and girls in all their diversity, particularly women and girls living with, affected by and at risk of HIV, and ensure clearly defined targets in support of their health and rights.
At the country level, UN Women is now established as an important partner and provider of technical support. We call on you to ensure that UN Women’s work in overcoming gender inequality and stopping violence against women fully addresses the needs of women and girls vulnerable to and living with HIV in each and every country of presence.

As you prepare to take office and develop your leadership agenda and priorities, we stand ready to serve you and continue our excellent collaboration with UN Women.

Yours in solidarity,

The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS