

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 24 JULY 10:00AM CET (GMT+2)**

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## Global partners pledge over \$1.2 billion to launch the MenStar Coalition

**Sir Elton John and the Duke of Sussex announce new global coalition focused on expanding diagnosis and treatment of HIV in men.**

### **Amsterdam, The Netherlands (July 24, 2018)**

Today, a diverse group of global partners jointly launched the MenStar Coalition at the 2018 International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam. Announced by Sir Elton John and the Duke of Sussex, the MenStar Coalition brings together the Elton John AIDS Foundation, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Unitaid, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), Johnson & Johnson, and Gilead Sciences. Leveraging over \$1.2 billion in initial planned funding from these founding partners, MenStar will expand the diagnosis and treatment of HIV infections in men – keys to breaking the cycle of HIV transmission and ultimately ending the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

Recent data from many high-burden countries show that men, particularly those aged 24-35, access HIV testing and treatment at low rates, endangering their own health and also expanding the spread of HIV among adolescent girls and young women.

MenStar will support innovative approaches to deliver appropriate and effective HIV/AIDS services for men, increasing their rapid uptake of HIV testing, linkage to HIV treatment, and achievement of viral suppression. Multiple approaches will be deployed including: data analytics and human-centered design to better adapt services to men; nuanced demand creation; targeted marketing; innovations, such as HIV self-testing; and supply-side solutions. The partnership will also ensure essential HIV commodities and services are available to meet increased consumer demand.

MenStar brings together the HIV service delivery capacities of the public sector with the consumer-oriented marketing acumen of the private sector to optimize efforts in reaching men with HIV testing and treatment. One of MenStar's first initiatives will be partnering with creative agencies in Kenya to develop an HIV self-testing campaign aimed at young men, supported by the Elton John AIDS Foundation, CIFF, and Unitaid to launch in 2019. The coalition will also support specific male-friendly strategies for HIV service delivery, such as dedicated men's corners at existing health clinics, expanded clinic hours, and deeper community engagement to better reach men.

With a planned contribution of over \$800 million to reach men in the next year, the United States, through PEPFAR, plans to reach an additional 1 million men with HIV treatment through its investment and support over 90% of men in this age group to be virally suppressed to effectively interrupt HIV transmission.

Given the common vision and interconnectivity between these individual efforts, the partners have formed a coalition to enhance each other's work and achieve greater impact, including by accelerating countries' progress toward reaching the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS 90-90-90 targets by 2020 for all ages, genders, and at-risk groups.

Sir Elton John commented: "It was a privilege to be able to launch such an important coalition of global partners as MenStar and for the Elton John AIDS Foundation to play such a pivotal role in its establishment. As a charity, we always try to pioneer new approaches to critical problems, then work with bigger players to optimize their impact. MenStar will give the Elton John AIDS Foundation the chance to do just that, to share learning quickly and complement one another's activities."

## **Annex 1: MenStar Coalition support quotes by organization**

### **Elton John AIDS Foundation**

“I am so proud to be helping to launch a major new coalition in the fight against AIDS. My Foundation has always believed in partnership as the best way to find solutions, share learning and optimise what is working. It’s time for men to really, fully become part of the fight against AIDS. MenStar is going to help them do that.” – Sir Elton John

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### **The U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)**

“We must innovate and accelerate to reach more men with lifesaving HIV treatment and ensure they are virally suppressed,” said Ambassador Deborah L. Birx, M.D., U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy. “PEPFAR will invest over \$800 million in the next year to advance the goals of the MenStar Coalition. Through our efforts, we aim to provide HIV treatment to an additional 1 million men and support over 90% of men in this age group to be virally suppressed to effectively interrupt HIV transmission.”

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### **Unitaid**

“Better engaging men in the response to HIV is critical given that too many do not get tested for HIV and do not access prevention and treatment services,” said Unitaid Executive Director Lelio Marmora. “We are proud to be part of the MenStar Coalition, which is looking to do just that. We have seen from our HIV self-testing projects that men are more likely to get tested if they have an opportunity to test themselves.”

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### **The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund)**

“Working with men is critical to end the HIV epidemic by 2030. Men are less likely to know their status, practice consistent prevention, or access treatment. We are delighted to help bring the MenStar Coalition to fruition, our aim is to enable partners to collaborate, adapt quickly, and learn from each other to more effectively reach men, and boys with HIV services.” – Peter Sands, Executive Director, The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

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### **The Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF)**

"CIFF is proud to be part of the MenStar Coalition. We champion HIV self-testing and other modes of self-care as one of the most powerful ways for adolescents, youth, women and men to take control of their sexual health. By unlocking the power of self-testing we can make testing convenient, confidential, and easy to fit it into your life. Millions don't want to get tested in a facility, millions are prevented from doing so because they can't take the time off work, millions more worry about who might see them or find out their status. Millions deserve the choice to test when they want, where they want and how they want. Together with the MenStar Coalition, we can realise the promise of self-testing towards breaking the cycle of HIV transmission."

– Kate Hampton, CEO, CIFF

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### **Johnson & Johnson**

"Breakthrough innovation has enabled us to prevent HIV transmission by reducing the virus in the blood to undetectable, and therefore untransmittable, levels," said Paul Stoffels, M.D., Vice Chair of the Executive Committee and Chief Scientific Officer, Johnson & Johnson. "Our goal in supporting this pioneering program is to break a major cycle of transmission among men by ensuring that young men infected with HIV are diagnosed and treated so they can stay healthy and prevent transmission. This program, along with our other efforts from prevention to cure, are part of our 25 year commitment to change the trajectory of the HIV epidemic and ultimately make HIV history."

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### **Gilead Sciences**

"Gilead is proud to join the MenStar Coalition in its efforts to break the cycle of HIV transmission," said Gregg Alton, Executive Vice President, International Operations and Corporate Affairs, Gilead Sciences. "As a company with a deep heritage in HIV, we know that increasing diagnosis and treatment rates can have a significant impact on helping to improve health and reduce new infections in at-risk communities around the world."

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