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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Nike Foundation Calls on Global HIV-Prevention Initiatives to Focus on Girls**

Marked by a new global partnership and a high-level meeting on girls and HIV in Senegal, World AIDS Week efforts bring girls to the center of the HIV response

**BEAVERTON, OR (December 5, 2008)** — Against the backdrop of World AIDS Week, the Nike Foundation has launched a global effort with government partners to put adolescent girls in developing countries at the center of HIV-prevention strategies.

Every day, 6,000 young people ages 15 to 24 become infected with HIV. Two-thirds of these new cases are girls. Yet, although girls face the greatest risks, prevention strategies to date have not put them at the core. Girls who are most at risk are also the hardest to reach – often isolated in marriage from a very young age, and not in school.

“This is an emergency. In Africa 75 percent of young people living with HIV are female, up from 62 percent in 2001,” said Lisa MacCallum, Managing Director of the Nike Foundation. “We keep avoiding the epicenter of the epidemic, and it’s not working. The only way to halt the spread of HIV is to put girls at the center of HIV prevention by investing in comprehensive programs that address the combination of girls’ education, health, safety and economic empowerment.”

On December 3, the Nike Foundation, the United Nations Foundation and UNAIDS co-hosted “The Girl Effect: HIV/AIDS Prevention Starts with a Girl,” a private meeting in Dakar, Senegal attended by more than 100 ministers of health, business leaders, global NGOs and AIDS ambassadors. Dr. Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS, gave the keynote address.

“We know that in many countries of Africa girls and young women are the most vulnerable to HIV infection. Strategies focused on them must be built directly into national responses to AIDS and attached to budget allocations substantial enough to take them to scale,” said Dr. Piot. “If we don’t invest in girls now, the consequences will be dire for the entire next generation.”

Today in Nairobi, Kenya, the Nike Foundation joined 15 other corporate, foundation and NGO partners and the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in launching the Partnership for an HIV-Free Generation. The Foundation will provide expertise in unleashing the girl effect – the power of adolescent girls in developing countries to bring unprecedented economic and social change to their families, communities and countries. Investments in the girl effect will demonstrate the most effective combinations of girl-focused programs to keep girls free of HIV.

Prior to the launch event, eight girls participated in a roundtable discussion with key dignitaries to talk about their personal experiences and how they're working to stop the spread of HIV in their communities. Four of the girls are participants in Binti Pamoja and TechnoServe's programs in Kenya – two Nike Foundation partners that are working to unleash the girl effect.

Binti Pamoja provides a safe space for adolescent girls to explore issues prevalent in their daily lives in Kibera, an urban slum in Nairobi that is home to one million people. The model is designed to grow virally, as graduates establish new safe spaces throughout Kibera. Girls participating from Binti include:

Maureen Atieno, 18, is a community organizer in Kibera. She has recruited girls from her immediate community to participate in Binti Pamoja's programs and works with the "Kicking AIDS Out" program.

Stephanie Shipemo, 20, also lives in the slum of Kibera. She became pregnant at 17 as a result of rape. Like most girls in that dire situation, Stephanie left school. Unlike most girls, she came back after her child was born. Completing fourth form this year, she is a peer educator at Binti Pamoja where she teaches 40 younger girls how to survive in the tough conditions of Kibera.

TechnoServe has established a first-of-its kind business plan competition for girls ages 15 to 22 with prizes that enable girls to start businesses, along with a pilot program focused on helping micro-entrepreneurs turn their enterprises into growing small businesses. Girls attending from TechnoServe include:

Cecilia Katungwa, 23, lives in Mukuru Fuatanyayo with her brother and younger sister. A winner of TechnoServe's business plan competition, Cecilia established a knitting and design business two years ago.

Joyce Waithaka, 20, first encountered TechnoServe in an enterprise club at her Muchatha school. She graduated with the determination to become a businesswoman and today she is just that. She supports herself and employs two young women her same age, so that they can also support themselves and not engage in risky behaviors.

“Girls like me in Kenya today may be more vulnerable to HIV, but we’re determined to be the solution, not victims of this disease,” said Katungwa. “Working with TechnoServe gave me the confidence and skills to become a businesswoman and set my own future. Because of my business I have choices that help keep me safe and HIV free. And today, I employ other girls from Nairobi’s slums so I can pass on what I learn and keep them HIV free too.”

The week’s events will culminate tomorrow in a youth festival in Nairobi arranged by the Partnership for an HIV-Free Generation to launch Jipange! (“Get yourself together”), a youth-oriented lifestyle brand focused on knowing one’s status and learning the facts about HIV. Thousands of youth will attend the festival featuring popular African music and dance performers.

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### About the Nike Foundation and Nike

**The Nike Foundation** ([www.nikefoundation.org](http://www.nikefoundation.org)) is a non-profit organization supported by NIKE, Inc., that is dedicated to investing in adolescent girls as the most powerful force for change in the developing world. **NIKE, Inc.** ([www.nikebiz.com](http://www.nikebiz.com)) based near Beaverton, Oregon, is the world’s leading designer, marketer and distributor of authentic athletic footwear, apparel, equipment and accessories for a wide variety of sports and fitness activities.

### About [girleffect.org](http://girleffect.org)

**girleffect.org** tells the story of girls creating a ripple impact on their families, communities and nations. Created by the Nike Foundation, it provides the tools for girl champions to spread the word.