



## **COCA-COLA AND WORKPLACE AIDS TREATMENT POLICIES: ACTIVIST DEMANDS**

*As people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, we insist that Coca-Cola uphold the human right to access to HIV/AIDS treatment and health care by ensuring equitable and sustainable AIDS treatment at no cost for all Coke system employees and their dependents living with HIV/AIDS as a standard of operations in Africa. Fully subsidized access to ARV therapy for workers and their dependents is not only an ethical imperative, but sound business practice that will result in reduced absenteeism, lower incidence of hospitalization, and reduced morbidity and mortality. We believe the success and availability of comprehensive AIDS treatment programs will bolster other efforts to combat AIDS in the private and public sectors, as ARV therapy will strengthen prevention efforts, increase uptake of voluntary counseling and testing, reduce the incidence of opportunistic infections, and reduce the burden of HIV/AIDS--including the number of orphans--on families, communities, and economies.*

*We believe Coca-Cola could prevent further infections and needless suffering and death among its massive workforce if they adhere to the principles laid out in our demands (below) and we will continue to protest Coca-Cola's unfair practices until such conditions and demands are met.*

### **We know:**

That fifteen months after Coca-Cola made a commitment to negotiate with business and bottling partners to provide AIDS treatment to workers, just eight bottlers have agreed to provide treatment under a cost-sharing scheme with Coca-Cola Africa Foundation, a private, non-profit organization as of September 29, 2002;

That any cost burden on workers, such as the 10% co-pay in Coke's initiative, is a barrier to access to treatment and will result in lower rates of utilization of the program, interruptions in treatment, and lower adherence rates due to inability to pay;

That Coca-Cola excludes dependents of workers from coverage in most of the programs that have been announced;

That Coca-Cola's apparent partnership with GlaxoSmithKline to supply some of the program's antiretrovirals may serve to shut out the possibility of the use of more affordable quality generic medicines;

That the current cost-sharing scheme will be a burden on small to medium bottlers and threaten both the speed of enrollment, confidence in sustainability of the program, and rollout of treatment programs;

That Coca-Cola has not integrated the HIV/AIDS policies into its system-wide operations as a minimum standard for business partners, such as bottlers;

That AIDS workplace programs of other companies go farther than Coke's initiative in making AIDS drugs available to workers and their dependents at no cost (e.g. Heineken, DaimlerChrysler).

### **We demand:**

**That Coca-Cola establish and subsidize minimum standards for its workers and business partners, namely the extensive networks of bottlers via exclusive contracts, that include comprehensive, equitable, and sustainable AIDS workplace policies and programs, including the provision of antiretroviral treatment at no cost to workers and their dependents;**

- As part of the treatment component Coke should procure the most affordable quality medicines for the treatment of HIV/AIDS available to make the program as sustainable as possible. This means considering competitive bids from generic drug producers that offer HIV/AIDS drugs at a fraction of the price of brand name drugs.
- As part of a comprehensive workplace-based response to the AIDS pandemic, Coke and its bottlers and partners should:
  - Offer voluntary confidential HIV testing and counseling (VCT) and psycho-social support to all workers.

- Distribute free condoms in the workplace, and provide safer-sex and sexual health education classes;
  - Develop further HIV/AIDS prevention and education policies in collaboration with affected employees, their labor representatives, and community-based health initiatives.
  - Adopt non-discriminatory hiring and promotion policies and practices.
- As part of a comprehensive workplace-based response to the AIDS pandemic, Coca-Cola should monitor, re-evaluate, and update its HIV/AIDS programs on the company level and system-wide. People living with HIV/AIDS should be involved in the development and appraisal of HIV/AIDS policies and programs.

**That Coca-Cola commit to sustaining such a program, continent-wide, indefinitely;**

**That Coca-Cola commit to rolling out such programs as soon as possible, and to fair and quick enrollment of the remaining 32 bottlers in Africa;**

**That Coca-Cola commit to development of similar HIV/AIDS programs for operations in developing countries outside of Africa.**

**WE ARE WATCHING.**