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## Acclaimed photo exhibition by women living with HIV opens in New York

20 November 2009

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"Circle in the sun" from The House is Small but the Welcome is Big exhibition  
Credit: www.thehouseissmall.org/Aires

On 17 November UNAIDS hosted a reception for the opening of an exhibition at the United Nations in New York entitled [The House Is Small But The Welcome Is Big](#), a project of the Los Angeles-based Venice Arts of over 40 extraordinary photographs made by South African women living with HIV and Mozambican children who lost both parents

to AIDS.

The exhibit, which runs until 11 December, sheds light on the hopes and aspirations of people affected by the epidemic, as well as the discrimination and stigma associated with HIV. Accompanied by biographical panels, the exhibit conveys the daily lives of 15 women and 18 children who face tremendous challenges because of HIV. The photos are simultaneously stark and hopeful, lively and compelling. Some are difficult to look at. All of them are hard to dismiss.

Bertil Lindblad, Director of the UNAIDS New York Office, said that the exhibit evokes the words of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon: "HIV is about everyone. It is not about 'us versus them'. There is no 'them' – only 'us', together."

The exhibit is one of many events worldwide commemorating World AIDS Day on 1 December.

**“The exhibit evokes the words of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon: “HIV is about everyone. It is not about ‘us versus them’. There is no ‘them’ – only ‘us’, together.”**

Bertil Lindblad, Director of the UNAIDS New York Office



"The Mozambican handshake" from The House is Small but the Welcome is Big exhibition  
Credit: www.thehouseissmall.org/Farida

Neal Baer, M.D., Emmy-nominated writer/executive producer of the television series *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* and a co-founder of the project, commented "These women and children have a lot to say through these images about living on their own and raising younger siblings by themselves," said Baer. "That's

the harsh truth about AIDS. Millions of children are growing up without the guidance or love of one or both parents, with many carrying parental responsibilities." *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* star Stephanie

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March joined Dr Baer at the event.

Also attending the reception was Ambassador Baso Sangqu, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations.

The name of the exhibition comes from one of the photographs taken by 28 year-old Funeka Nceke of Cape Town. On the wall of her friend's home hangs an embroidered cloth that reads, "The House Is Small But the Welcome Is Big." Funeka lives in a shack with no electricity or running water with her two children and two additional family members.

One beautiful photograph titled "My Memories" shows a pair of hands gently touching old black and white photographs. "Photographs of my parents are displayed, which show their past. I show everyone my parents [when they were] alive through these photos, which is a joy for me," says Joaquim Macamo, the 16 year-old photographer. Macamo lost both of his parents to AIDS in 2001 and lives with his 20 year-old sister.

The exhibit has been featured at venues around the world, including New York City; Los Angeles, Oakland, and Palo Alto, CA; Boston, MA; Colorado Springs and Denver, CO; Tallahassee, FL; Maputo, Mozambique; Toronto, Canada; Mexico City, Mexico; and Paris, France.

Award-winning Venice Arts has run innovative programs in documentary photography, filmmaking, and digital media/arts since 1993. The organization also implements participant-produced photo documentary projects with adults and children, and co-directs the Institute for Photographic Empowerment in collaboration with the University of Southern California Annenberg Center for Communication Leadership.

