



# PRESS RELEASE

CONTACT:

Laura Barnitz, Global Health Council  
202.833.5900 x3204 or lbarnitz@globalhealth.org

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 19, 2008**

## **International AIDS Candlelight Memorial**

LILONGWE, MALAWI – The Opening Ceremony for the 25th Anniversary of the International AIDS Candlelight Memorial was held in Lilongwe, Malawi, on May 18th. Malawi's President Bingu wa Mutharika presided over the ceremony and lit the ceremonial candle, kicking off Candlelight Memorial events commemorated in 115 countries. The Candlelight Memorial is the world's oldest and largest grassroots HIV/AIDS mobilization event.

President Mutharika called upon Malawians to go for voluntary testing and counseling to learn their HIV status and commended civil society organizations in Malawi for being strong advocates for improved HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment programs. The former president of the Republic of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, also joined in the call for HIV/AIDS awareness and continued government commitment to fighting the disease.

Maurice Middleberg, vice president for public policy at the Global Health Council, thanked the government of Malawi for being a committed partner in the fight against AIDS and recognized the Malawi Network for People Living with HIV/AIDS (MANET+) for its leadership in civil society. MANET+ is a nongovernmental umbrella organization for more than 400 HIV/AIDS support groups throughout Malawi.

Malawi is one of the sub-Saharan African countries hardest hit by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Thousands of Malawians attended the Candlelight Memorial in Lilongwe at Civo Stadium.

# # #

*The Global Health Council is the world's largest membership alliance dedicated to saving lives by improving health throughout the world. The Council serves and represents thousands of public health professionals working in more than 100 countries on six continents. [www.globalhealth.org](http://www.globalhealth.org)*