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1999 DECEMBER 1ST

**PRESS RELEASE FOR WORLD AIDS DAY : NAC
MEETS THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC**

The National AIDS Council's delegation, led by its Chairman, Professor Jean-Albert Gastaut, emphasized to President Chirac not only the importance of keeping the fight against AIDS as a programme apart, enjoying national and international priority, but also that it should take into account other health and social issues of major concern, such as the fight against hepatitis C and tuberculosis.

It is more necessary than ever that the public authorities should maintain and support financially an approach that has proven its worth not where official bodies are concerned (AIDS division of the Public Health Directorate, National AIDS Research Agency, National AIDS Council) but also with regard to local associations. This is so because the number of individuals living longer with HIV/AIDS is increasing significantly due to the progress made in treatment achieved since 1996 and the efforts of many different actors (official agencies, researchers, doctors, sufferers, activists, etc.).

The NAC delegation also set out in detail for the President the principal goals and issues in the fight against AIDS :

- the catastrophic epidemic situation facing the developing countries, particularly those in Sub-Saharan Africa, as President Chirac has emphasized on several occasions, but also in Asian countries ;
- the growing proportion of newly infected individuals made vulnerable by life in uncertain circumstances ;
- the major, urgent problem posed by thousands of individuals in France (as well as abroad) for whom treatment has failed ;
- the danger that "habituation" to the AIDS issue might compromise continuation of the preventive policy despite its importance.

Finally, the NAC delegation presented to the President of the Republic a hardback copy of the third volume of its activity report, *Éthique, Sida et société - 1997 - 1998* [Ethics, AIDS and Society].