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# Letter to Senator Dianne Feinstein on signing an Executive Order on access to HIV/AIDS pharmaceuticals and medical technologies

William J Clinton

## Letter to Senator Dianne Feinstein on Signing an Executive Order on Access to HIV/AIDS Pharmaceuticals and Medical Technologies

May 10, 2000

Dear Senator Feinstein:

I am pleased to inform you that today I will sign an Executive Order that is intended to help make HIV/AIDS-related drugs and medical technologies more accessible and of fordable in beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries. The Executive Order, which is based in large part on your work in connection with the proposed Trade and Development Act of 2000, formalizes U.S. government policy in this area. It also directs other steps to be taken to address the spread of HIV and AIDS in Africa, one of the worst health crises the world faces.

As you know, the worldwide HIV/AIDS epidemic has taken a terrible toll in terms of human suffering. Nowhere has the suf fering been as great as in Africa, where over 5,500 people per day are dying from AIDS. Approximately 34 million people in sub-Saharan Africa have been infected and, of those infected, approximately 11.5 million have died. These deaths represent more than 80 percent of the total HIV/AIDS-related deaths worldwide.

To help those countries most affected by HIV/AIDS fight this terrible disease, the Executive Order directs the U.S. Government to refrain from seeking, through negotiation or otherwise, the revocation or revision of any law or policy imposed by a beneficiary sub-Saharan government that promotes access to HIV/AIDS pharmaceuticals and medical technologies. This order will give subSaharan governments the flexibility to bring life saving drugs and medical technologies to affected populations. At the same time, the order ensures that fundamental intellectual property rights of U.S. businesses and inventors are protected by requiring sub-Saharan governments to provide adequate and effective intellectual property protection consistent with World Trade Organization rules. In this way, the order strikes a proper balance between the need to enable sub-Saharan governments to increase access to HIV/ AIDS pharmaceuticals and medical technologies and the need to ensure that intellectual property is protected.

I know that you preferred that this policy be included in the Conference Report on the Trade and Development Act of 2000, as did I. However, through this Executive Order, the policy this Administration has pursued with your support will be implemented by the U.S. Government. The Executive Order will encourage beneficiary

sub-Saharan African countries to build a better infrastructure to fight diseases like HIV/AIDS as they build better lives for their people. At the same time, the Trade and Development Act of 2000 will strengthen African economies, enhance African democracy, and expand U.S.African trade. Together, these steps will enable the United States to forge closer ties with our African allies, broaden export opportunities for our workers and businesses, and promote our values around the world.

Thank you for your leadership on this critically important issue.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.