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700,000 sign HIV funding petition — Campaign

NEW YORK: About 700,000 people signed a petition for more funds to fight HIV which will be handed to UN chief Ban Ki-moon yesterday ahead of a meeting of donors, the Born HIV Free campaign said.

The petition calls for the international community to provide the necessary funds to eliminate the transmission of HIV from mothers to children by 2015, Born HIV Free, which is supported by French First Lady Carla Bruni-Sarkozy, said in a statement.

In 2009, 53 percent of women with HIV were treated with antiretroviral drugs to reduce the risk of transmission during pregnancy, childbirth

or breastfeeding, according to the campaign.

The Born HIV Free campaign had increased public awareness and action in this important part of the fight against AIDS, said Michel Kazatchkine, director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The Global Fund hopes to raise US\$20 billion to accelerate its programmes, but previous commitments suggest it is highly unlikely to reach that target.

About 20 million people have watched Born HIV Free's videos on its website and video-sharing site YouTube, the statement said. — AFP