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Aishwarya Rai is UN AIDS ambassador

MUMBAI: Indian Bollywood star Aishwarya Rai Bachchan has been named as an ambassador by the United Nations AIDS agency and will be tasked with raising awareness to prevent HIV among children.

One of Hindi cinema's most famous faces abroad, Rai Bachchan in her new role will be mainly advocating for the Global Plan, launched in June last year and focused on India and 21 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

The scheme aims to eliminate new HIV infections among children by 2015 and keep their mothers alive, partly through improving access to HIV prevention and treatment.

"Spreading awareness on health issues, especially related to women and children, has always been a priority for me," the actress said

in a statement from UNAIDS after her appointment as a goodwill ambassador on Monday.

"And now, as a new mother, I can personally relate to this – the joys and concerns of every mother. I strongly believe that every baby should be born free from HIV."

Rai Bachchan took the Miss World crown in 1994 and made her debut in Bollywood in the late 1990s.

She has since gone on to star in more than 40 mostly Hindi films as well as a few foreign movies, including *The Pink Panther 2*.

She married fellow actor Abhishek Bachchan in 2007 and is well-known for her appearances on the red carpet at the Cannes film festival.

She had her first child in November last year. — AFP