



## International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC) ITPC Summary #5 September/October 2007

### **ITPC: HIV Collaborative Fund Calls For submission of proposals in 3 regions.**

East Africa, West/Central Africa and South Asia call for submission of proposals from legally registered community-based organizations, working on HIV treatment education, advocacy and related issues. Joint projects that are related to establishment/supporting of an advocacy coalition of PLWHA organizations are also encouraged to apply. Deadlines are set from 26<sup>th</sup> October – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2007. For more information please contact ITPC regional coordinators.

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### **Germany: Donor Governments pledge record amounts to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM)**

26 donor governments and one foundation, gathering at a Replenishment meeting of GFATM in Berlin from 27 – 30 September 2007, promised they would give at least \$9.7 billion over the next three years. The meeting, opened by Chancellor Angela Merkel and chaired by former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, is anticipated to be the first and largest financing exercise for health ever undertaken for the coming two years. The three countries that pledged the highest amount for 2008-10 were United States (\$2.1b), France (\$1.2b) and UK (\$729m) respectively.

In this meeting Germany and Indonesia also signed the first ever Global Fund Debt2health initiative which aims to free up domestic resources through debt relief to invest in urgent public health needs to fight against AIDS, Tuberculosis and malaria. 200 million Euros have been committed by Germany to this innovative financing tool over 3 years and Indonesia is supposed to pay 25 million Euros to the GFATM for activities conducted in Indonesia.

For more information about this meeting, please visit <http://www.aidsplan.org/documents/gfo/GFO-Issue-77.htm> or <http://www.theglobalfund.org/>

### **United States: More than 100 organizations call for a National AIDS strategy to end the epidemic in United States.**

Many U.S.-based non-profit organizations have requested the presidential candidates to commit to developing a results-oriented national AIDS strategy which reduces HIV infection rates, ensures access to treatment for PLWHA and eliminates racial disparities. The call to action suggested that a national AIDS strategy should place a greater emphasis on prevention and treatment needs of African Americans and other communities of color, MSM and other groups at elevated risk. In addition, It should also promote a strengthened HIV prevention and treatment research effort, address social factors that increase vulnerability to infection. Individuals or organizations, wishing to express their concerns, can sign on on the website below. <http://www.nationalaidsstrategy.org>

### **UNAIDS is urging action concerning the transmission of HIV to children through sexual abuse, incest and early teenage sex.**

During a recent conference at Harvard Medical School in Boston, Dr. Piot cited that nations need to have a public debates about the need for sex education and respect for women. According to the statistic nearly half (48%) of new infected with HIV worldwide are women and girls who contracted HIV through sexual abuse, between a young girl and an older man, sex between adolescents and incest. The executive director of UNAIDS also pointed out that sex education in schools is not universal, a rate of stigma and discrimination in school is still high and adherence to the ART programme is not effective because it doesn't fit well into typical school schedules. Some reports of the conference revealed that girls who have received sexual education tend to practise abstinence or safer sex. Referring to the study on HIV-transmission, women are at more risk to get infection during sexual intercourse because of female anatomy as well as fear of violence and economic dependency when they are to ask their husband to wear a condom.

### **Treatment Action Group (TAG) reaction to the failure of Mersk's adenovirus-based HIV vaccine**

TAG issued a statement about the discontinuation of the STEP study, an HIV vaccine efficacy trial, in reply to the failure of vaccine that was believed to induce HIV-specific CD8 T cell responses. In this statement TAG reminded all researchers to follow up all STEP study volunteers in order to obtain data for future trials. The next two planned HIV vaccine trials will include an adenovirus component, and will also prime an immunization by using a different DNA-based vaccine plus several additional proteins which are considered as an important approach. 'The big science mechanisms such as the Global Vaccine Enterprise and the Center for HIV/AIDS Vaccine Immunology may also be ill-equipped to support innovative investigator-initiated research efforts' TAG added.

### **Washington D.C.: World Bank funding use of defective HIV-Testing Kits in India.**

Dr. Kunal Saha, a consultant of Government Accountability Project (GAP), had been hired to examine HIV testing in India during March and April 2007. His study shows that HIV-test kits funded by the World Bank, distributed by Monozyme, Ltd. (Brand names: SD bioline, Biozyme) and used in many hospitals/blood banks in West Bengal, produced 'false negatives'. 'This might have had a direct impact on blood donation' he claimed. The HIV testings were forced to use the sub-standard kits given by the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO). His effort to address such problem to the World Bank failed in July 2007 as the World Bank postponed a decision to address the issue by saying that there is no evidence that the kits were faulty. He required the bank and NACO to issue a wide-range public health alert to people in India about problems with the tests. 'World bank has treated this public health emergency in India bureaucratically and evasively' mentioned GAP.

In reply to the complaint, World Bank officials at the beginning of this month have agreed to hire two independent consultants to investigate the reliability of HIV test kits in India but the timeline has not been set. Besides, it would take some time to complete a systematic review of the HIV test kit programme in India, said Graeme Wheeler, the bank's managing director.

### **Tanzania: ACORD calls for East African Community (EAC) to exploit TRIPS flexibilities to increase access to HIV treatment.**

In the high level meeting between EAC and UNFPA Mr. Nanjakululu J. Wasai, the ACORD policy and advocacy has urged EAC to do bulk purchasing of drugs for OIs. He called on the legislators from the region to lobby international donors in order to cancel debts and use the money saved to invest in health services for poor people. 'It's also necessary for legislators to get involved more in trade negotiation and for the region's policy makers to source for local funds' he added. Other issues were also discussed including provision of health care to children living with HIV/AIDS and their free universal primary and secondary school education, Ugandan discriminatory

laws and etc. Therefore, the director UNFPA country technical services team based in Ethiopia, Mr Benson Morah, called for more detailed discussion between Mr. Nanjakululu and UNFPA and other policy makers in the region to define key policy directions.

### **China: Taiwanese Supreme Court announces a verdict in the case of discrimination against PLWHA**

Nicole Yang, a founder of the Harmony Home Association – a Taiwanese non-profit organization which has been providing PLWHA with shelter and care over 20 years, won their case in court. Initially the case was brought up to the Taiwanese district court in October, 2006 by people living in the neighbourhood of the organization who demanded the facility be relocated to a remote or sparsely populated area to avoid "scaring" others. The court then announced that the organization must relocate to another district because of 'public health concern'. In response to this verdict, Nicole Yang had dismissed the court ruling as 'outrageous and discriminatory against AIDS patients' and turned to seek support from international AIDS organizations in other countries. In a letter of solidarity, documentation and legal assistance were rendered. Later she appealed the court and finally won in the Supreme Court in October 2007. The current location will continue to be a shelter for 55 PLWHA and in this matter Nicole Yang has expressed her deepest gratitude to those organizations who have signed the petition.

### **Hot discussion on ITPC list serv**

#### **Patronising attitude towards treatment access: ARV drug in Africa is only provided on a monthly basis.**

The issue raised by Vivienne who pointed out some significant failures in ART adherence programme in Africa. People have to travel to a specific location which can be time-consuming and expensive. In Zimbabwe it usually happens that once patients arrive at the clinic, they find out that the clinic is short on drug supply, while 'in Rwanda people sell their ARV medicine to get money to eat', Anne-christine d'Adesky added. Julian V Hows explained the reason of short time prescribing as procuring drugs, stocking pharmacies with a minimal supply so patients can only have access to costly products. Providers doubt if the individuals (especially IDUs migrant communities) are on substitution therapy such as methadone, or display an ungrateful attitude toward patients. Olive Edwards went further by mentioning bureaucracy in accessing drugs in Jamaica. The conclusion being that our advocacy efforts should concentrate on this point.

#### **Reaction on Ugandan president statement**

According to the statement of President Museveni Yoweri 'to die of AIDS is a treason because you betray your family who had invested in you and expected you to help them', many organisations including The International Community of Women living with HIV/AIDS (ICW) have expressed their concern and urged the president to clarify his statement. As a result of several discussions, The Pan African Treatment Access Movement (PATAM) has also launched a letter of concern requesting President Museveni to immediately withdraw his remarks.