



# HIV/AIDS NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER FROM THE NATIONAL HIV/AIDS AND TB PROGRAMME, PRETORIA

18 May 2001

## EDITOR'S NOTES

For contributions, please submit contributions and suggestions to [serenc@health.gov.za](mailto:serenc@health.gov.za).

## STAFF MATTERS

Happy birthday to Dr. Nono Simelela, Chief Director for the programme who celebrates her birthday today, 18 May.

## ABUJA SUMMIT

Dr. Nono Simelela participated in the African Summit on HIV/AIDS, TB and Other Related Infectious Diseases held in Abuja, Nigeria from 24 - 27 April 2001. The Organisation of African Unity hosted this international conference. She also formed part of the technical committee that assisted in the Draft Declaration. She has since then returned to Abuja to do some further work in this regard. For those interested in seeing some more of this work, please consult the following website address:

[www.oau-oua.org/afsummit](http://www.oau-oua.org/afsummit)

## SUPPORT BY CENTRES OF DISEASE CONTROL

The Centres for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, USA provides significant support to the Health Department. Some of the highlights of this support in the last 2 months are:

### *HIV/AIDS, Business and Labour*

In March & April Renee Saunders continued the training of trainers programme for master trainers within labour unions.

## *VCT*

In April CDC provided funding to the Department to print the following counselling guidelines: *Ten Day HIV/AIDS Counsellor Training Course for Participants*, and *Ten Day HIV/AIDS Counsellor Training Course for Facilitators*.

### *Youth HIV/AIDS Prevention*

In April CDC providing funding for facilitators to assist Department staff in strategic planning among youth organisations and in decentralising youth programmes to provinces.

### *Tuberculosis*

William Coggin from the CDC continues to provide long-term support to the TB programme, assisting primarily in implementing an electronic TB Register, as well as general programme support.

## PREPARATIONS FOR UNGASS

The HIV/AIDS unit is working hard on preparing documentation for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS to be held from 25 - 27 June 2001 in New York.

From inputs received Celicia Serenata has already prepared the first draft of a document detailing the efforts of government in addressing HIV/AIDS. Additional inputs are still awaited on the civil society response.

## ENSURING WOMEN'S VOICES ARE HEARD

The "Women in Partnership against AIDS" initiative, comprising one day



provincial workshops organized by staff from the provincial GAAP offices and facilitated by the POLICY Project, attracted participants (310 in total) from a wide range of women's organizations. This highly successful initiative commenced in November 2000 and culminated in a national summit held in Johannesburg on 27 and 28 March 2001. The purpose of the summit being to establish a national consultative forum to strengthen the responses of women in South Africa to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Represented at the summit were members from all 9 provincial "Women in Partnership" committees, staff from the HIV/AIDS and STD Directorate and the SANAC representative for women's issues who was mandated to present to SANAC results of both the provincial workshops as well as recommendations made at the summit.

Key issues that emerged from the provincial workshops were:

- Human Rights/Women's Rights: that the rights and freedoms of women must be respected
- Fear, Stigma and Denial: that these are a vicious circle.
- Vulnerable Young Girls: in some countries over a third of 15 year olds may die of AIDS the majority of who are girls.
- Lack of Education/Knowledge: People who have access to good information are more likely to make well-informed decisions and act on that information.
- Women Carrying the Burden of Care: To enable women to share in the burden of care in their communities we need to reinforce their economic independence.
- Reviewing Sexual customs and Norms: A gender sensitive response involves the promotion of cultural beliefs and values that support mutually responsible behaviour.

- Male Involvement: through their lack of involvement men continues to be a barrier to women's sexual and reproductive health.
- The Orphans Left Behind: Many children before the age of 15 have lost their mother or both parents, and communities are challenged to find ways to support these orphans.
- Poverty: HIV/AIDS is inextricably linked to the cycle of poverty.
- Women's Organisations Lack Resources: If women's organizations are being asked to form partnerships against HIV/AIDS and to share in the ever-increasing burden of care national budget allocations should be made accordingly.

Copies of all provincial workshop reports, the final report and the summit report can be made available on request. For further information please contact Nosicelo Mbele on (012) 312-0118.

#### CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL WEEK

This is the 17<sup>th</sup> year that the international community commemorates candlelight memorial week, providing an opportunity to remember those who have succumbed to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

On Sunday 20 May 2001 this weeklong focus culminates in the Candlelight Memorial ceremony to be held at the Nasrec Exhibition Centre in Johannesburg, from 11:00 - 14:30. The Deputy President will attend this event.

If you don't have plans already, we would love to see you there! For those who are in other provinces, please phone the GAAP office at (012) 312-0133 to enquire about provincial activities!



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