

ACCELERATION OF HIV PREVENTION EFFORTS IN THE AFRICAN REGION

The Regional Committee,

Bearing in mind that HIV/AIDS is one of the leading causes of mortality in the African Region, disproportionately affecting young people and women, thwarting development and jeopardizing national security of Member States;

Alarmed that each year, more than 2 million people lose their lives to HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa and that in 2004 alone, more than 3 million new infections occurred in the African Region;

Bearing in mind the commitments made by Heads of States, the United Nations system and international partners in the Abuja Declaration, the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals, and the Maputo Declaration;

Bearing in mind the increasing political commitment and engagement in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the African Region by national governments and stakeholders, and the opportunities offered by increasing resources from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, the World Bank Multi-Country AIDS Programme, the United States President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief and from other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries, and others;

Concerned that programming and implementation of the existing evidence-based and cost-effective interventions for HIV prevention have not been on a sufficient scale, coverage and access to these interventions remain low, and that new HIV infections are still occurring at unacceptably high levels;

Concerned that half of newly infected individuals in the Region are young people aged between 15 and 24 years, and that the escalating risk of infection is especially evident among women and girls who make up two thirds of the young people living with HIV/AIDS in the Region;

Encouraged by the progress made in implementing the 3 by 5 initiative and convinced that scaling up treatment and care offers a good opportunity for accelerating HIV prevention efforts; Having considered the report of the “Consultation on Prevention of HIV Infections in the African Region” held in June 2005, and the recommendations of the Programme Sub-Committee and the RC55 Round Table on HIV Prevention in the African Region;

1. NOTES the recommendations of the “Consultation on Prevention of HIV Infections in the African Region” held in June 2005, and the recommendations of the Programme Sub-Committee, and the RC55 Round Table on HIV Prevention in the African Region to accelerate HIV prevention efforts in the African region;

2. DECLARES 2006 a Year for Acceleration of HIV Prevention in the African Region and calls on Member States to accelerate HIV prevention;

3. URGES Members States to;

- (a) re-emphasize and re-invigorate HIV prevention efforts with a sense of urgency, ensuring the setting of appropriate targets, in synergy with treatment efforts;
- (b) ensure effective leadership and coordination of HIV prevention efforts and accelerate the implementation of multi-sectoral responses;
- (c) identify and tackle deeply rooted causes of vulnerability which reduce the ability of individuals and communities to protect themselves and others from HIV infection;
- (d) develop appropriate policies and legislation to create a supportive environment for scaling up HIV prevention interventions, including addressing issues of stigma and discrimination, and negative cultural values, and protection of vulnerable groups;
- (e) develop appropriate strategies and plans for accelerated HIV prevention;
- (f) increase access to quality health-sector based prevention interventions by strengthening health systems;
- (g) scale up prevention programmes which target the youth, women, girls and other vulnerable groups, including sex workers;
- (h) accelerate decentralization of programme management and service delivery with intensified partnership with Non Governmental Organizations, Faith Based Organizations, the private and corporate sectors, traditional leaders, communities and People Living with HIV/AIDS, ensuring their full participation and ownership;
- (i) commit long term investment and sustained engagement and advocate with the international community for increased resources to support scale up of effective HIV prevention efforts;
- (j) strengthen south-south cooperation and exchange of best practices in HIV prevention;
- (k) promote local research in order to better understand the dynamics of HIV transmission in order to mount appropriate responses;

- (1) strengthen collaboration between research institutions and partners in order to develop and assess the effectiveness of innovative HIV prevention interventions, including male circumcision, microbicides and HIV vaccines.
4. REQUESTS partners to intensify both financial and technical support to countries to facilitate the scaling-up of HIV prevention efforts in order to reach the desired impact;
5. REQUESTS the Regional Director to:
 - (a) develop a strategy for accelerated HIV prevention in the African Region and provide technical support to Member States in the development and implementation of action plans for acceleration of HIV prevention interventions;
 - (b) mobilize more resources and long-term international support for scaling up effective HIV prevention interventions;
 - (c) ensure effective leadership and coordination of HIV prevention efforts, in collaboration with UNAIDS;
 - (d) monitor progress in scaling-up HIV prevention efforts in the Region and report to the Regional Committee every two years.

Eighth meeting, 25 August 2005