



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 8, 2007

Contact: Lori Heise, 202 454 5028
mobile: 301 580 5344 lheise@path.org

Microbicide Bill introduced on International Women's Health Day Legislation Brings Women's HIV Prevention Method One Step Closer to Reality

Washington, DC - The Global Campaign for Microbicides is pleased to announce the introduction of the *Microbicide Development Act of 2007*. The bill is being introduced in commemoration of International Women's Day by Senators Barack Obama (D-IL), Olympia Snowe (R-ME), and other supporters.

"It is time to speak the truth and acknowledge the facts," stated Senator Barack Obama. "It's women who are biologically and socially more susceptible to the HIV infection, in part as a consequence of biology, but mostly because of uneven power between the sexes around the world. It is a fact that marriage is no protection from HIV transmission for women."

The Microbicide Development Act would establish a dedicated microbicide research and development branch at the National Institutes of Health and strengthen microbicide activity at the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Centers for Disease Control. Regarded as one of the most promising new technologies to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic, microbicides are a class of products currently under development that women could use to prevent transmission of HIV and other infections.

"Passage of this bill will bring us closer to the goal of getting critical prevention tools into the hands of women," stated Lori Heise, Director of the Global Campaign for Microbicides. "Current prevention options are simply not enough. We need user-initiated HIV prevention strategies that take into account women's real needs and vulnerabilities."

Women and girls are increasingly affected by HIV/AIDS in every region of the world. Worldwide, more women are getting infected with HIV than men - the majority by their male partners. In sub-Saharan Africa, nearly three quarters of young people ages 15-24 living with HIV are women.

"This is not just an issue for women in developing countries," notes Dazon Dixon Diallo, founder/CEO of SisterLove, Inc. "We need microbicides right here at home too, because many of the issues that place black women at risk are the same the world over. AIDS is the number one cause of death among African American women aged 25-34."

The feminization of the AIDS epidemic calls for a comprehensive approach to HIV/AIDS that includes social and economic empowerment for women, increased access to existing prevention methods, as well as research into new prevention technologies, complemented by appropriate treatment, care and support.

###

The Global Campaign for Microbicides is an international movement of activists, citizens and non profit organizations dedicated to accelerating access to new HIV prevention tools, especially for women.

<http://www.global-campaign.org>