



Global Campaign News – Issue #46 December 21, 2004

Welcome to the biweekly *Global Campaign News*! The *Global Campaign News* is a forum for international exchange on microbicide activities and information with an aim to build a more informed and integrated movement for microbicide development and other prevention options against HIV and STDs. This and previous issues of GC News are available online at <http://www.global-campaign.org/gcnews.htm>

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Canadian Government contributes \$15 Million to IPM North America

Joint Media Release from the Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development and the Canadian AIDS Society

A Canadian coalition of microbicides advocates applauded the announcement of the Canadian Government's \$15 million contribution to the International Partnership for Microbicides (IPM), made by the Minister of International Cooperation, the Honourable Aileen Carroll on World AIDS Day (December 1st).

The Microbicides Advocacy Group Network (MAG-Net) is a Canadian coalition of over 30 non-governmental organizations and researchers interested in microbicides. MAG-Net is an affiliate of the Global Campaign for Microbicides. MAG-Net members, coordinated by the Canadian AIDS Society, have been advocating for a significant Canadian contribution to microbicides development for over four years.

"Since this year's World AIDS Day theme focuses on women and girls, we are delighted that Canada is playing a leadership role in addressing HIV/AIDS as a gender issue," commented Michael O'Connor, Executive Director of the Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD), and member of MAG-Net. "Canada's contribution will strengthen the global effort to develop and deliver microbicides."

"While all people will benefit from the eventual availability of microbicides, the need is particularly urgent when it comes to protecting women's health in developing countries," stated Gail Flintoft, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Canadian AIDS Society. "In Canada, microbicides will provide a valuable new prevention tool for many vulnerable communities."

"Protecting and fulfilling the human right of all persons to the highest attainable standard of health requires proactive measures to equip people with accessible, affordable HIV prevention tools that are fully under their control," said Marc-André LeBlanc, Coordinator of MAG-Net at the Canadian AIDS Society.

Members of MAG-Net, including CAS and ICAD, have argued that in light of gender inequalities, to ensure a comprehensive Canadian response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and to meet its domestic and international commitments, Canada should support research and development of female-initiated prevention technologies such as microbicides. Support in this area should include generous funding for organizations such as the International Partnership for Microbicides (IPM) and support to Canadian organizations actively involved in community-based research and community preparedness.

In addition, Canada could show leadership on the global stage by developing a Canadian Microbicides Plan. Such a Plan could outline Canada's contributions to microbicides development, delivery and equitable access both domestically and internationally. It should include Canadian contributions from multiple sectors (government, researchers, community organizations, private sector), thus ensuring a comprehensive, coordinated Canadian response.

Over 39 million people are living with HIV/AIDS worldwide, including 56,000 Canadians.

More than 40 screenings of the Global Campaign for Microbicides' new film Global

During the week of World AIDS Day – December 1 - new and old partners all over the world came together to launch the Global Campaign for Microbicides' new film "*In Women's Hands*." The film aims to target donors, policy makers, advocates and others on the issues surrounding microbicides development. It is the Campaign's hope that the personal stories portrayed "*In Women's Hands*" will speak to the need for microbicides, their potential role, the importance of leadership on this issue -- and provide an inspiration for action.

With well-established networks throughout the world, the Campaign coordinated film screenings of this short video often along with a moderated panel and audience discussion. The film was launched on World AIDS Day to commemorate this year's theme: women, girls, HIV and AIDS.

More than forty film screenings took place in thirteen countries including: Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Botswana, 5 cities in Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Nigeria, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and more than 20 cities in the U.S. The screenings were hosted by organizations as diverse as Oxfam in Australia, University of Toronto in Canada, the Norwegian Association Against AIDS, Planned Parenthood Mar Monte in California, the African American Education Cultural Center Hawaii, and the Oberlin Student Global AIDS Campaign in Ohio. For a complete list of screenings go to www.global-campaign.org/worldaidsday.htm

Across the world "*In Women's Hands*" was well-received and generated positive feedback and media attention. One audience member wrote to the Global Campaign after seeing the film at the Positive Women's Network in Vancouver, Canada. "...thank you for producing a very powerful, informative and emotional overview of the need for microbicides and an understanding of the environments in which clinical trials are being conducted. [This film] will be an extraordinary tool in raising awareness and advocacy for microbicide development."

In the coming year, the film will be made available to interested organizations and individuals to host their own screening or use the film at meetings, conferences and other events. The film can be requested at the Global Campaign's website: www.global-campaign.org/film.htm for a small fee for those from donor countries, and for free for those organizations from the Global South who cannot afford to pay. The film will be sent out in early February 2005.

European Parliamentarians urged to take action on women and HIV Europe

On December 1st, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) joined delegates from European member states, European Commission and UNAIDS officials, ambassadors of developing countries and representatives of civil society for a hearing on 'Women, Girls and HIV' to mark the occasion of World AIDS Day. The event was hosted by the European Parliamentary Working Group on Population, Sustainable Development and Reproductive Health (EPWG) in partnership with the Global Campaign for Microbicides, the International Partnership for Microbicides, the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative and the Stop AIDS Alliance.

In line with the theme of this year's World AIDS Day, a diverse panel of women speakers addressed the gendered impact of HIV and AIDS from a range of perspectives. Among the speakers were Lori Heise, Director of the Global Campaign for Microbicides, and Beatrice Nabulya, long-time advocate for microbicides and female-controlled prevention options. As a woman and mother living with HIV, Beatrice spoke passionately in defense of women's rights as a fundamental response to the pandemic. Cheryl Overs, former Coordinator of the Network of Sex Work

Projects, addressed the links between HIV/AIDS, sex work and human rights, arguing that prevention, care and treatment is unlikely to succeed unless work is done to protect the human rights of sex workers. Dr. Florence Manguyu, a practising pediatrician in Nairobi and a senior consultant of IAVI highlighted the role that an HIV vaccine could play in protecting women from HIV.

An outline of the priorities of the forthcoming Luxembourgian EU Presidency in the area of HIV/AIDS were set out by Patrick Hemmer, First Secretary for Development Cooperation at the Permanent Representation of Luxembourg to the European Union. The meeting then concluded with Wanjiku Kamau of the International Partnership for Microbicides challenging each of the European Union institutions to “go and do some homework” and to report back next year.

The EPWG was established in 1991 as an all-party group in the European Parliament, representing a cross-section of the EU Member States and the Parliament’s political groups. Its main aim is to raise awareness and resources within the EU of the need for an integrated approach to poverty reduction, reproductive health and rights, sustainable social and human development, the fight against HIV/AIDS, and gender equality. It is currently chaired by Anne van Lancker MEP, who facilitated the World AIDS Day event.

Microbicides Exhibit featured in numerous locations in Seattle North America

From November 15th to December 26th, the Northwest Microbicide Coalition have been touring *Giving Women Power Over AIDS* throughout Seattle Washington. The exhibit was accompanied by speakers and events focused on women’s prevention needs.

One of the highlights of the tour was a reception at the Seattle Art Museum on the evening of World AIDS Day. More than 150 friends, colleagues, and donors of the Coalition gathered to view the exhibit and listen to several distinguished speakers from the Seattle area.

Congressman Jim McDermott reminded the audience that although we have made many advances in fighting and treating HIV, “we have not yet slowed down this epidemic. It is accelerating in a lot of places around the world.” Helene Gayle Director, HIV, TB, and Reproductive Health at The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation asserted: “Funding for microbicides and other female controlled methods are one of the biggest next leaps in our effort to make a difference in the HIV epidemic.”

The most memorable part of the evening was an eloquent, thoughtful, and passionate speech by Paula Bock, journalist at The Seattle Times and author of “In Her Mother’s Shoes,” the story on which the exhibit is based. Paula told the story of meeting Ruth Njawara Chimuenji, a young mother raising two children in Zimbabwe. The day after Paula and Seattle Times photographer Betty Udesen, met Ruth and her family, Ruth passed away from AIDS. Paula and Betty spent the next several days learning more about Ruth and her family, and later published the story in The Seattle Times to give people an understanding of the horrifying numbers of deaths from the AIDS epidemic in Africa. “As journalists, this is our job--to tell other people that these statistics are people with dignity and dreams,” Paula observed.

One audience member reflected, “This extraordinary exhibit and story left an indelible mark that led me to take action by relaying the horrific circumstances and statistics to my peers. Ultimately, I feel a deep need to get involved and will find some mechanism where my skills can be used toward raising awareness of these issues.”

In addition to the Art Museum event, the exhibit was displayed at three separate locations at the University of Washington and at the brand new Seattle Public Library. The Coalition also worked with the African American Reach and Teach Health Ministry to tour the exhibit to three churches, the Rainier Beach High School, and the Langston Hughes Community Center.

To read “In Her Mother’s Shoes”, you can visit: <http://www.seattletimes.com/aids>

To find out more about this exhibit, please visit: <http://www.global-campaign.org/exhibit.htm>

New Fact Sheets on Women and HIV/AIDS from Kaiser Family Foundation North America

Just in time for World AIDS Day, the Kaiser Family Foundation has updated its fact sheets on "Women and HIV/AIDS in the U.S." and "The HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the United States." These fact sheets provide an overview and key trends, impact on specific groups, such as minorities, women, youth, and men who have sex with men, and the U.S. government response.

In addition, this month's Kaiser Health Poll Report featured topic uses data from the 2004 Kaiser "Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS" to explore the public's views on the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the U.S., including perceived progress on the epidemic, personal concern about becoming infected, and knowledge about the disease in this country.

You can find all of these resources at:

Women and HIV/AIDS in the United States Fact Sheet <http://www.kff.org/hivaids/6092-02.cfm>

HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the United States Fact Sheet <http://www.kff.org/hivaids/3029-04.cfm>

Kaiser Health Poll Report Featured Topic <http://www.kff.org/HealthPollReport/>

Other Kaiser World AIDS Day Resources <http://www.kff.org/worldaidsday/2004.cfm>

Dr. Anthony Fauci anticipates increase in NIH funding for microbicide research North America

On World AIDS Day, December 1st, Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, the Director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases within the National Institutes for Health (NIH), released a statement on the theme of Women and AIDS. In this statement, Dr. Fauci anticipates a healthy increase in microbicide funding for next year. "NIH supports a full spectrum of topical microbicide research," he noted, "from basic research to clinical evaluation, with the goal of developing a potentially lifesaving tool. NIH funding for topical microbicide research rose from \$47 million in fiscal year 2001 to an estimated \$70 million in fiscal year 2005." *News releases, fact sheets and other NIAID-related materials are available on the NIAID Web site at <http://www.niaid.nih.gov>.*

Microbicides Featured in Health Alert newsletter Asia-Pacific

The December issue of Health Alert Asia Pacific examines the factors that make women vulnerable to HIV. The issue featured a lengthy article by Bobby Ramakant, Indian microbicides advocate, entitled "Microbicides: An Added Ray of Hope."

Bobby discusses the opposing forces that are involved in the development of microbicides. "Morally conservative and patriarchal social norms make it difficult to confront the reality of a sexually transmitted epidemic. A culture of silence around women's sexuality aggravates the stigma associated with seeking information or interventions about self-protection."

"Much progress has been made on microbicides, but many challenges remain. Badly needed is a significant increase in investment from both the public and private sectors. Another challenge is to involve men, and to address the unequal power equation between men and women."

Health Alert Asia-Pacific is a quarterly newsletter on health and development issues published by Health Action Information Network (Philippines) in collaboration with Healthlink Worldwide (UK). The full article is available at: <http://www.hain.org/Ha/hanewsletter.htm>

We welcome your input and contributions for future issues!

Correspondence can be addressed to info@global-campaign.org.

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