



## Global Campaign News – Issue #56 July 21, 2005

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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### Microbicides at the G8 summit

#### Global

For the first time in G8 history, the G8 recognized the urgent need to develop a safe and effective microbicide. Specifically, the G8 Gleneagles Africa statement states: “(e) Building on the valuable G8 Global HIV/AIDS vaccine enterprise, increasing direct investment and taking forward work on market incentives, as a complement to basic research, through such mechanisms as Public Private Partnerships and Advance Purchase Commitments to encourage the development of vaccines, microbicides and drugs for AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other neglected diseases.”

On 9 July, the African Microbicide Advocacy Group, the Alliance for Microbicide Development, the Global Campaign for Microbicides, and the International Partnership for Microbicides released press statements in Canada, France, Germany, UK, and US announcing the G8’s recognition of microbicides.

“Today’s announcement from the G8 is an important step forward for the world’s women, who desperately need a method of HIV prevention that they can initiate, rather than rely on men’s willingness to be faithful or to use condoms,” said Lori Heise, Director of the Global Campaign for Microbicides. Manju Chatani, the Coordinator of the African Microbicides Advocacy Group, added, “We believe a microbicide will provide a powerful new option for African women to protect themselves. We encourage the G8 to also support efforts towards preparing for future access to effective microbicides, now.”

These press statements are available at [www.global-campaign.org/g8.htm](http://www.global-campaign.org/g8.htm)

### Final UNAIDS HIV prevention paper released

#### Global

After numerous drafts and consultations, the Programme Coordinating Board of UNAIDS has now approved the final policy position paper, entitled: *Intensifying HIV Prevention*. The final version approved is quite strong on the need for new prevention tools, including microbicides. This is a direct result of concerted advocacy on the part of many groups to raise the profile of these issues in the document. Included throughout the paper in several sections, there are 7 mentions of vaccines and microbicides jointly and two additional references to microbicides.

In particular, under the heading “Principles for Effective HIV Prevention Programmes”, UNAIDS states: “The need for a long-term investment in AIDS, and HIV prevention in particular, has major implications for national

governments and donors, in terms of resources, in maintaining and extending the necessary human and institutional capacity required, and in funding research into new prevention technologies, primarily HIV vaccines and microbicides.”

The final paper is available at: [http://www.unaids.org/html/pub/governance/pcb04/pcb\\_17\\_05\\_03\\_en\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.unaids.org/html/pub/governance/pcb04/pcb_17_05_03_en_pdf.pdf)

## **Film now available on-line!**

### **Global**

The Global Campaign for Microbicides’ new film *In Women’s Hands – A Film on Women, HIV, and Hope* is now available to order online. Filmed in several locations across the world, this short documentary is an important tool for organizing and creating awareness around the increasing rates of HIV/STD among women and the importance of advocacy for microbicides. The personal stories portrayed in the film speak to the need for microbicides, the importance of leadership on this issue, and provide inspiration for action. Order your copy by visiting [www.global-campaign.org](http://www.global-campaign.org) and following links to *In Women’s Hands*. Let us know how you use the film in your advocacy work by writing to us at [info@global-campaign.org](mailto:info@global-campaign.org).

## **Microbicide awareness among a sample US student population**

### **North America**

*By Cora Walsh*

On 15 May, more than 70 college juniors who were selected as 2005 Truman Scholars gathered in Missouri for a week-long leadership development program. In addition to information sessions about graduate schools and public service careers and community service projects, the Scholars participated in Group policy projects.

Led by Katy Backes of Ibis Reproductive Health (and a 1999 Truman Scholar), five students conducted a project entitled, “Youth and HIV/AIDS: Empowering Students to Understand and Access New Prevention Technologies.” The students outlined a plan to build pilot student advocacy initiatives on campuses located in Boston, MA and Lagos, Nigeria. Specifically, Cora Walsh, Forrest Dunbar, Xuan-Trang Ho, John Phillips, and Jeremy Sueker conducted a survey of the 2005 Truman Scholars, addressing levels of existing awareness and interest in microbicides among a population of active and involved students from around the country.

A total of 70 college juniors were anonymously polled, of which 64 submitted responses. Surprisingly, only 33% (21) of these students had ever heard of microbicides. However, having microbicide products explained to them, 87.5% (56) of students expressed an interest in future use of these products, and a 61% (39) majority of students indicated some interest in microbicide advocacy. Asked to provide examples of student groups on campus that might be interested in microbicide advocacy work, some responses included: the Student Global AIDS Campaign, Planned Parenting Groups, GLBT Groups, Women’s Resource Centers, Students for Choice, Student Health Centers, Progressive Alliances, and campus Public Health Magazines.

These results, while not designed to represent all college students, do indicate student interest substantial enough to warrant further surveying and targeting of the student population. Historically, students have been an integral part of national movements, devoting their time, energy, and enthusiasm to causes in which they believe. This survey is one indicator of the vital base students could provide for the microbicide movement. The Global Campaign looks forward to building on the results of this survey and working with student advocates around the world. If you are interested in building a student microbicide advocacy network, contact Bindiya Patel at [bpatel@path-dc.org](mailto:bpatel@path-dc.org)

*Established by the US Congress in 1975, the Truman Scholarship Foundation awards scholarships for college students to attend graduate school in preparation for careers in government or elsewhere in public service. More information about the Truman Scholars program is available at <http://www.truman.gov/>*

## **Microbicides featured in pre-G8 parliamentary event**

### **Europe / Africa**

On the 6-7 June, parliamentarians from G8 and African countries gathered for the “G8 International Parliamentarians’ Conference on Development in Africa 2005” hosted by the Scottish Parliament and organised

jointly by the World Bank, the Inter-European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (IEPPFD), Interact Worldwide and the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank.

The two-day conference debated the findings of the Commission for Africa Report and held plenary sessions and special sessions on critical issues impacting development in Africa, with a focus on HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health. The aim of the conference was to use Parliamentarians' key role in promoting the development agenda to influence the leaders attending the G8 summit, with a view to seeking the resources necessary to tackle poverty.

The plenary sessions featured prominent speakers including (among others): Imelda Henkins, Deputy Executive Director, UNFPA, Isatou Njie-Saidy, Vice President & Secretary of State for Women's Affairs, the Gambia, Jim Yong Kim, Director, HIV/AIDS Department, World Health Organisation, and Steven Sinding, Director General, International Planned Parenthood Federation.

The importance of integrating HIV with sexual and reproductive health (SRH) responses, including investment in New Prevention Technologies, in the fight against HIV/AIDS was highlighted in the plenary on 'Investing in people: Health, Education, HIV/AIDS and Population'. Each conference attendee also received a copy of the Global Campaign for Microbicides' film 'In Women's Hands,' and many expressed eagerness to learn more about microbicides. The Deputy Secretary General of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, Collen Gwiyo, was pleased to receive the DVD as this was the first time their union was learning about microbicides and their use as a potential tool for HIV prevention. The National Director of the National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS in Malawi, Tiwonge Loga-Thindwa, viewed the DVD as an important resource for organisations such as her own involved in advocating, among other things, for more prevention options for women.

In a plenary session, Hon. Priscilla Misihairabwi-Mushonga, MDC Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs for Zimbabwe, stressed the importance of addressing the gender aspects of the HIV pandemic by also dealing with the underlying gender inequities which relegate women and girls to a subordinate position with respect to economic, cultural, social and political matters worldwide. She further raised the issue of the SRH needs of positive women and in this respect prevention technologies such as microbicides would play an important role in increasing their choices and in exercising their SRH, apart from simply preventing mother to child transmission.



The conference culminated in the drafting of the Edinburgh Declaration, which presents recommendations addressing the development needs of Africa, with a particular focus on HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health and rights, in the context of aid, trade, debt relief and conflict resolution. Among other recommendations, the Declaration calls upon the G8 leaders to 'support, including through increased funding, the implementation of the "Three Ones" to improve the coordination and harmonization of efforts to address HIV/AIDS through the complete continuum of prevention, (including exploring new technologies), treatment and care'. Human rights advocate Baroness Helena Kennedy, President of Interact Worldwide, presented the declaration to the Prime Minister's office prior to the July G8 summit on the eve of the UK's EU presidency on June 30, 2005.

*Pictured here: Ann McKechin MP, Gavin Strang MP, Christine McCafferty MP and Baroness Helena Kennedy with Ros Davies, Chief Executive of Interact Worldwide deliver the Edinburgh declaration to No 10 Downing Street.*

For more information on the conference, including video footage of the debates, please visit <http://www.holyrood.tv/library.asp?title=G8%20International%20Parliamentarians'%20Conference%20on%20Africa&section=57>

## Questions and cautions about lime juice as a microbicide

### Global

As many people have heard, lime juice is currently being investigated as a potential microbicide. Although there is a lot of public discussion about this possibility, to date, there has not been a great deal of factual public information. The Global Campaign will soon be issuing a statement with preliminary data, but in the meantime we have created a

simple factsheet that provides information about what is known, what remains unknown, and some basic messages to consider. This interim factsheet is available at our download center – [www.global-campaign.org/download.htm](http://www.global-campaign.org/download.htm)  
An excerpt from the messaging section is included below:

Until we know the answers to the questions above, our messages about lime juice as a potential microbicide must reflect caution. Otherwise, we risk misleading people who may use lime juice for prevention, when it could have no effect or be harmful.

- We desperately need an effective, affordable, and accessible microbicide. But the only way we can know if a product is really safe and effective is by doing ethically-conducted trials. Until the trial data are collected and analysed, we can only guess whether a product works or not.
- Just because a product is “natural” rather than chemically manufactured does not automatically mean it is safe, or safe at all dosages or for all people. We must conduct scientifically rigorous research specifically designed to answer these questions.
- Remember the lesson of N-9. Early data suggested that it was safe for women to use and we knew it killed HIV in a test tube. Trial data in 2000, however, showed that N-9 was not effective in reducing HIV risk. In fact, using it more than once a day may actually increase HIV risk slightly by irritating the vaginal membranes and making it easier for the virus to enter the blood stream.
- We cannot recommend that people use any product for prevention of HIV until it has been proven through research to be safe and effective. Lime juice has not yet passed that test.

## Brussels NGOs inspired at special screening of “In Women’s Hands”

Representatives from 10 Brussels-based NGOs and the local UNAIDS office attended a special screening of “In Women’s Hands” at the Global Campaign’s secretariat in Brussels on 19 May. Co-hosted by the International Partnership for Microbicides (IPM), many in the audience knew little about microbicides before the film. Tessa Mattholie, IPM European Liaison Officer, gave an update on the recent work of IPM to develop a microbicide using antiretroviral approaches and to improve scientific and regulatory capacity for the field. A lively discussion followed, touching on such topics as condoms, contraception and fertility, research and clinical trials, and the implications of microbicides for men.

Attendees included representatives from the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), the German Foundation for World Population (DSW), the IPPF European Network (IPPF-EN), the Stop AIDS Alliance, the Inter-European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (IEPPFD) and Marie Stopes International (MSI). All have an interest in HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health issues in Europe, with many playing a vital role in shaping international sexual and reproductive health policy and funding. “The film definitely made an impact,” said one attendee from IPPF-EN. “Afterwards, we discussed microbicides all the way back to the office.”

As a result of the screening, the European Public Health Alliance, which represents more than 100 non-governmental and other not-for-profit organisations working on public health in Europe, posted an article about microbicides on their website. See <http://www.eph.org/r/34>

## Monthly pipeline update from the Alliance Weekly News Digest Global

As many GC News readers already know, our partner organization the Alliance for Microbicide Development publishes a *Weekly News Digest* that complements the information that GC News provides. The Alliance’s *Weekly News Digest* is an unedited compilation of media coverage of microbicides and pertinent subject matter; abstracts of articles on microbicides and relevant science published in peer-reviewed journals; material on other reproductive health and HIV prevention technologies, importantly including HIV vaccines; and matters of policy and politics with importance for microbicide research, development, and advocacy. The *Weekly News Digest* is available at: <http://www.microbicide.org/publications/digest.shtml> or you can sign up free of charge by sending an email to Cecilia Fox [cfox@microbicide.org](mailto:cfox@microbicide.org).

On the first Friday of each month, the Alliance for Microbicide Development’s *Weekly News Digest* includes an update on overall progress in the field. Below, you will find the update that was published on 1 July 2005:

**SUMMARY: MICROBICIDE CANDIDATE COMPOUNDS AND PRODUCTS IN DEVELOPMENT**

No. in Active Preclinical Development: 14  
 No. in Clinical Development: 14  
 TOTAL: 28

MICROBICIDE CLINICAL TRIALS (July 2005)	
PHASE	TRIALS
1	ACIDFORM™/Amphora™
	Carraguard®
	Cellulose acetate 1,2-benzenedicarboxylate (cellacefate/CAP)
	Cellulose sulfate/CS
	Lime juice
	TMC120 gel
	TMC120 vaginal ring
	UC-781
	VivaGel/SPL7013™
	1/2
2	Protected Lactobacilli in combination with BZK
	Tenofovir/PMPA gel (1%) (HPTN 059)
	TMC120 gel
2/2B	Tenofovir/PMPA gel (1%) and PRO 2000 (0.5%)
	BufferGel™ and PRO 2000 (0.5%) (HPTN 035)
3	Carraguard®
	Cellulose sulfate/CS
	PRO 2000 (0.5% and 2%)
	Savvy™(C31G)

*This table is an attempt to give a picture that is as accurate as possible of the microbicide candidates that have reached the clinical stages of testing. The trials that appear in this table may be (1) in the active planning stage, (2) ongoing, or (3) recently completed but with published analysis pending. For any modifications, please contact Carolyn Plescia, tel. 301-587-3302, email cpllescia@microbicide.org.*

**Media Highlight: Microbicides in *The Nation* North America**

Established in 1865 by US abolitionists, [The Nation](#) has been informing the American public about culture, politics, and progressive issues for the past 140 years. With an impressive list of current and past [contributors](#), this weekly journal enjoys and deserves recognition as an institution of journalistic integrity.

Earlier this spring, *Nation* readers were introduced to the issue of microbicides after *The Nation's* Peter Rothberg heard about microbicides from GCM's program assistant, Katie West. In late June, another article, entitled [Preventing AIDS](#) appeared on *The Nation* website, resulting in an increase of over 115 signatures to our petition and new GC News as compared to the previous week. View the second article at: <http://www.thenation.com/blogs/actnow?pid=3894>

Thanks to *The Nation* and all of our new subscribers!

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We welcome your input and contributions for future issues! Please send emails to: [info@global-campaign.org](mailto:info@global-campaign.org). If you would like to unsubscribe to the Global Campaign News, please reply to this e-mail with the subject line: UNSUBSCRIBE.