



An overview of UNDP Policy Presence at International AIDS Congress – Bali, August 2009 *(PNG Discussion)*

Presentation by: Peterson Magoola, HIV/AIDS Specialist UNDP PNG

Overview-ICAAP



- ❖ The biennial International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP) is the most important meeting on AIDS in the region and brings together national and provincial governments, UN, CSOs/CBOs, regional organizations and donors.
- ❖ The 9th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP) took place in Bali in August 2009
- ❖ UNDP had a strategic and notable presence and organized events on the following key issues:
 - i. Human rights; Gender; Sexual diversity
 - ii. Impact of financial crisis
 - iii. Mainstreaming and
 - iv. Community participation

UNDP was represented by the global, regional and the Indonesia CO teams and the mission was led by Jeffrey O'Malley, Director of the HIV/AIDS Group, El Mostafa Benlamlih, and Caitlin Wiesen RCC

Human Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity:

A. South East Asia Court of Women on HIV and Human Trafficking

- Symbolic court held in conjunction with the 9th ICAAP (Not a typical court)
- The jury of six eminent legal and human rights experts heard real-life testimonies (including harrowing stories of trafficking, violence and exploitation)
- Court provided a forum for women across SE Asia to share their personal survival stories and to create further awareness about trafficking, sexual exploitation, bonded labour, and HIV in the region

Recommendations

- *Empower women and reduce their vulnerability to trafficking and HIV in the region - leaders, politicians, activists and communities who are working to make a difference to*
- *Urgently address the vulnerabilities of women to trafficking and HIV*
- *Develop strategic partnerships and alliances between affected communities, the legal profession, human rights bodies, parliamentarians and policy makers*

B. Sex-trafficked girls at heightened risk to STIs and HIV; less likely be reached by prevention programmes



- Findings from a study conducted by Harvard University Titled, “Sex Trafficking and STI/HIV in Southeast Asia (Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia, demonstrated: (*Findings from Thailand*)
 - Trafficked FSWs reported significantly greater numbers of male clients – an average of 33.4 vaginal sex episodes with clients in the past month as compared with only 24.6 such acts among those non-trafficked ($p=0.03$).
 - Anal sex, which represents a relatively high level of HIV risk, was three times as common among sex trafficked FSWs (8.2% vs. 2.6%; $p<0.01$)
 - Trafficked FSWs faced greater difficulties regarding condom use; 22.4% of trafficked women reporting recent condom failure compared to 12.4% of non-trafficked FSWs.
 - Recent condom non-use was far more prevalent among trafficked FSWs compared to non-trafficked FSWs (8.2% vs. 3.1%; $p=0.02$).

Recommendations:

- *Greater dialogue required across the spectrum of responses to sex trafficking and HIV within sex work, including advocates for the rights of both sex workers and children, advocates for the prevention of trafficking, law enforcement policy-makers and practitioners, as well as those leading public health efforts to reduce HIV in the context of sex work,*



C. Overcoming Legal Barriers to Comprehensive Prevention Among Men who have Sex with Men and Transgender People in Asia and the Pacific (UNDP, APCOM)

- More than **90 per cent** of men having sex with men (MSM) in Asia Pacific and do not have access to HIV prevention and care services
(UNAIDS report 2006)
- Currently **22 countries** in the Asia Pacific region criminalize male to male sex
- Laws are often taken on the force of vigilantism, leading to abuse and human rights violations

Recommendations

- *overhaul of legal frameworks across the region to allow public health and community sectors to reach out to MSM*
 - *Investment in legal and social programmes to address stigma and discrimination against MSM and TG.”*
 - *Create enabling legal environment and human rights based HIV policies and programmes for MSM and TG, for achievement of MDGs*
- (6)



D. HIV and women's inheritance and property rights

- It is increasingly being acknowledged that addressing structural factors is key to halting and reversing the spread of HIV
- One of the emerging though not well understood factors in the rise of HIV among women is the denial of property and inheritance to women
- Link between HIV and women's unequal property inheritance rights need to be understood
- Lack of equal rights for women and girls to property and inheritance excludes women from accessing the resources that would help reduce their vulnerability to HIV and improve their ability to cope with consequences of HIV
- Barriers to women's property and inheritance rights can set up downward spiral of lost economic opportunities, reduced security, and higher dependence on male relatives

E. HIV and intimate partner transmission

- An estimated 50 million women in Asia are at risk of contracting HIV from their intimate partners
- Approximately 90 percent of the 1.7 million women living with HIV in Asia became infected from their husbands or partners while in long term relationship *(UNAIDS report 2009 -Intimate partner transmission)*
- The problem of intimate partner transmission of HIV is rooted in gender inequality, violence and discrimination that is so pervasive in the Asian region
 - Men are more likely to hide or delay their HIV status to partners compared to women
 - Non disclosure prevents condom use and hence higher transmission of HIV
 - The subjugation of women, their low status in society, and exclusion from decision making them vulnerable to contracting HIV

Recommendations :

- *Integration of protection of women into HIV prevention programmes*
- *Scale up interventions for MSM , IDUs and Clients of sex workers*
- *HIV prevention among mobile populations and migrant workers with focus on protecting intimate partners*
- *Operational research to deepen understanding of the dynamics of HIV transmission among intimate partners*

Financial Crisis and HIV

1. The impact of the financial crisis on labour migration and HIV

- In the midst of the current financial and economic crisis, there are likely to be direct and indirect consequences of migrant labour supply and demand
- A two way increase in the movement of people;
- Overseas workers returning home after losing their job, or those laid off at home moving overseas in search for work
- Some countries may take increasingly protectionist stances and options for formal migration may narrow
- Migrants abroad may face increasingly difficult conditions with fewer employment opportunities

Recommendation:

Host and destination countries to examine most effective policies to ensure migrants have adequate access to health care and HIV services through out the migration cycle

2. The impact of financial crisis on PLHIV and their households

PLHIV households have been pushed into the vicious cycle of poverty, debt, and destitution as the crisis has forced them out of job

– Resulting into:

- Reduced food consumption
- Inaccessibility to treatment and health care

Recommendations:

- *Strengthen efficiency of cost effectiveness , particularly of HIV prevention efforts*
- *Develop an early warning system to track and minimize treatment interruptions and monitor the impact of the crisis on a regular basis*
- *Poverty and social safety nets to prioritize households with a range of micro credit and financing schemes , medical and life insurance*

For more information on UNDP events at the ICAAP, please visit;
<http://icaap.undprcc.lk>

