



UNAIDS Office on AIDS, Security and Humanitarian Response (SHR)

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IN FOCUS: AIDS PLACED HIGH ON AGENDA OF HAITIAN PEACEKEEPING MISSION

Efforts to combat HIV among peacekeeping troops bound for Haiti received a significant boost in June. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and representatives from the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) arrived in the country to develop an HIV/AIDS programme for the newly established peacekeeping mission before the arrival of the main contingent of troops.

"This is extremely important development," said Dr Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS. "We know the impact of AIDS on peacekeepers. Therefore, it is imperative to have a comprehensive AIDS prevention programme in place that targets peacekeeping troops and civilian staff."

The United Nations Security Council passed resolution 1542 in April 2004, setting up the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). According to this resolution the Security Council welcomes and encourages every effort by the United Nations to sensitize peacekeeping personnel in the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases in all its peacekeeping missions.

"It is very encouraging that the Security Council has placed such importance on the need to address HIV," said Ulf Kristoffersson, Director of the UNAIDS office on AIDS, Security and Humanitarian Response (SHR) who was heading the mission. "This will not only benefit the mission personnel but also the host community in Haiti which, with a prevalence rate of over five percent, is the most badly affected country outside sub-Saharan Africa. Haiti is extremely vulnerable to HIV."

Accompanying UNAIDS on this mission was Dr. Ingrid Molina, the new HIV/AIDS policy advisor to MINUSTAH, whose responsibility it will be to coordinate the HIV/AIDS programme throughout the mission. Force Commander Lieutenant-General Heleno Ribeiro Pereira (Brazil) welcomed the initiative to address HIV/AIDS from the offset of the mission and has stated that he will issue a policy of "zero tolerance" restricting troop fraternization with the local community.

This unprecedented joint activity was carried out under the auspices of the Cooperation Framework signed by UNAIDS and DPKO in 2001. Both parties have agreed to work together to respond to the growing AIDS epidemic and to mitigate its impact on international peace and security. Similar activities will be carried out in all new UN peacekeeping missions.

- ✘ As part of its behavioural change communication materials, the SHR has produced almost 300,000 HIV/AIDS awareness cards.
- ✘ Peacekeepers have received 190,000 cards, and national uniformed services 94,000 cards, which is to increase dramatically in the coming months.
- ✘ SHR has also supported the production of a HIV/AIDS awareness card for UN employee. (see section on humanitarian response)

National Security: Uniformed Services

Eastern Europe and Central Asia

In **Moldova** the SHR funded project has now completed training of trainer workshops, and the next phase of training the field garrisons and the staff is ongoing. During a mission in May it was assessed that the awareness training needs to be further supported with peer education activities, which finds strong support among the military, carabinieri and the border guards. In **Ukraine** the project with the military was completed in December 2003. However, the assessment in May 2003 shows that the activities fertilized the ground for other services, such as the

police, border guards and internal forces to develop similar activities in their uniformed personnel. This has geared up the national response, and increased the other external support and use of internal resources on HIV/AIDS issues.

The awareness cards for national uniformed services have been produced in **Latvian, Lithuanian, Romanian (for Moldova) and Uzbek**, to address the young conscripts in their own language. The trainings in these countries are now at the stage when the field personnel in the garrisons are addressed with the behaviour change communication materials.

The projects for **Russian Federation** and **Kyrgyzstan** were cleared by the Project Review Committee (PRC) of UNAIDS in June. The United States Department of Defence have begun implementing an HIV/AIDS project with the armed forces of **Tajikistan**, SHR have complimented this project through providing the necessary training materials for uniformed services. SHR is facilitating the development of a project proposal to support the other uniformed services in Tajikistan, i.e. police, border guards and internal forces with HIV/AIDS training.

A Regional workshop for the CIS on HIV/AIDS and uniformed services is planned for 31 August – 2 September in Moscow, **Russia**. The workshop is coordinated by US Department of Defence and it is planned to develop draft strategic plans to strengthen HIV/AIDS prevention activities within the Russian and CIS militaries, and to review HIV/AIDS diagnostic and treatment approaches.

SHR is supporting activities in 11 countries in this region.

Latin America and the Caribbean

During the advocacy mission to **Dominican Republic** from 14 to 19 of April 2004, a Declaration of Partnership was signed by the Ministry of Defense, the National Police and UNAIDS, which was represented by the Director of SHR, Dr Ulf Kristoffersson. The National authorities committed themselves to contribute in the design and development of a programme focusing on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention for young men and women in the Police and Armed Forces. This programme will be supported with the technical and financial assistance from SHR.

Dominican Republic, together with **Uruguay, Peru and Brazil** are now part of the growing list of countries that have signed a declaration of partnership with UNAIDS. These countries have given their full commitment to address HIV/AIDS among uniformed services, reaffirming previous commitments stated in the Security Council Resolution 1308 and the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS.

SHR is currently working with 19 countries in this region.

South and East Asia

On 17 May 2004 a Declaration of Partnership was signed in Ulaanbaatar between the Government of **Mongolia**, represented by the Minister of Justice and Home Affairs and the Minister of Defence, and UNAIDS represented by the Director of UNAIDS/SHR. Through the partnership the Mongolian government commits itself to carry out HIV prevention activities among the uniformed services, particularly targeting young recruits in the Mongolian armed forces. SHR Peer education kit is currently being translated into Mongolian.

In May a meeting was held between the **Thailand** Minister of Defence and UNAIDS/SHR, in which it was agreed that the UNAIDS Peer Education Kit

for uniformed services will be incorporated into all in-service training programmes for new recruits. It was also agreed that the Minister would attend the Leadership Forum - Uniformed Services session on the 12th July during the XV International AIDS Conference, to launch the UNAIDS Case Study on the Royal Thai Army's experience with HIV/AIDS prevention and control. During this session a Declaration of Partnership will be signed by the Thai Government, represented by the Minister of Defence and Minister of Public Health, and UNAIDS.

During Peter Piot's visit to **China** in May a meeting was held with Mr. Xu Hu, Deputy Director, Public Order Bureau in the Ministry of Public Security, during which it was noted that there was a need for increased collaboration with the Ministry of Public Security in training of the police force on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. As a follow-up the UNAIDS country office is looking into the possible areas of closer collaboration.

The **Papua New Guinea** military is interested in building up partnership with UNAIDS to start an HIV/AIDS programme with the young recruits. The military together with SHR is preparing a needs assessment, with the aim of starting the possible programme and activities by the end of 2004.

SHR in collaboration the UCC in **Bangladesh**, Mr. Evaristo Marowa, meet with the armed forces in Dhaka in May 2004. This meeting has led to the formation of a technical working group which will develop appropriate HIV/AIDS activities for the national uniformed services including future peacekeepers.

The uniformed services HIV/AIDS awareness card is now been translated into Sinhalese to compliment a project with the armed forces in **Sri Lanka** which is currently under review by the UN Theme Group in Colombo

SHR is collaborating with 13 countries in this region

Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

A proposal entitled HIV/AIDS and Uniformed Services in the Middle East & North Africa is being drafted by the UNAIDS intercountry team of the Middle East and North African region. This proposal provides for a framework to develop a sustainable partnership with the Uniformed Services Sector (i.e.: Ministries of Defence, Interior, etc.) on HIV/AIDS in MENA countries. More specifically, it aims to:

- -Mobilize and enable the Uniformed Services Sector in MENA Countries to effectively address the challenges of HIV/AIDS/STI among uniformed services particularly among young recruits.
- -Strengthen existing National strategies or instigate the development of national

strategies that addresses HIV/AIDS among the national uniformed services both civil and military.

- This proposal will cover selected MENA countries (that include in the first stage: **Algeria, Sudan, Morocco and Lebanon**)

Sub-Saharan Africa

In June SHR approved a project proposal on integration of HIV/AIDS into **African Union** Peace and Security Council and protocol of its Standby Force (SBF).

Burundi has concluded its first project on HIV/AIDS and uniformed services, and has prepared a proposal to expand on engaging the growing number of ex-combatants to prevention and awareness raising activities.

Rwanda Armed Forces have requested the support of SHR on a program addressing HIV/AIDS and STD prevention and VCT promotion among the Rwandan armed forces. The activities focus on behaviour change through interpersonal communications and availability of condoms.

A project proposal was submitted on **Sierra Leone** Defence Force and Police. The activities focus on young recruits (military, police) and ex-combatants, while the total beneficiaries amount to approximately 3,000 direct and 20,000 indirect.

A project in **Tanzania** seeks to strengthen HIV prevention among new recruits of Tanzania People's Defence Force through integration of HIV/AIDS and life skills in the training curriculum. This will include training of peer educators, establishment of VCT services and ensuring condom supply.

Angola is requesting assistance to a project on HIV/AIDS prevention project with the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) and the Police Force. The institutional capacity of the FAA and the Police will be strengthened through mobilization around and training on HIV/AIDS programming.

SHR is currently working with 19 countries in this region as well as regional organizations such as SADC, ECOWAS and the African Union.

Humanitarian Response: Vulnerable Populations in Crisis Settings and Humanitarian Workers

Gender in conflict zones

UNAIDS/SHR has been undertaken a Desk Review to assess the work and impact of the UNAIDS/UNIFEM HIV/AIDS Gender Advisor in Sierra Leone in order to improve and strengthen similar initiatives in other affected areas, particularly Angola and DRC. The report is currently being reviewed while fund raising efforts are underway in order to continue similar activities.

UN employees

SHR has worked in conjunction with the ACTION project (Access, Care, Treatment and Inter-Organizational Needs) which is coordinated by WHO/JMS to produce an HIV/AIDS awareness card for UN employees. This card contains information on the United Nations HIV/AIDS Policy as well as basic facts on HIV/AIDS.

International Security: Peacekeeping Operations

UNAIDS led a joint mission with Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to **Haiti**, 13–17 June, (see In Focus section). The joint-mission sets a new precedent for peacekeeping operations; similar joint initiatives are being planned for **Burundi** and **Sudan**.

Security Council Resolutions 1542 (April) and 1545 (May), establishing the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and the UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB) respectively, both underscored the importance of HIV/AIDS sensitization for peacekeepers. The MONUC HIV/AIDS policy adviser provided pre-deployment training for mission HQ staff, military observers and for 're-hatting' African Union peacekeepers in Burundi. The UCC in Haiti facilitated the pre-deployment training for MINUSTAH HQ staff.

UNAIDS SHR has been assisting DPKO in identifying and screening HIV/AIDS policy adviser candidates for peacekeeping operations in Burundi,

Cote D'Ivoire and **Sudan** The HIV/AIDS policy adviser in East Timor was re-deployed to the UN mission in **Liberia** (UNMIL). The mission began a training of HIV counsellors in June, including civilian and military personnel, local NGOs and other implementing partners. UNMIL plans to introduce 5-day training of trainers workshops for peer educators at every troop rotation, drawing on the SHR peer education kit, and to incorporate HIV/AIDS training in the police academy curriculum. The mission's public information office has developed a media plan for behaviour change communication in UNMIL. As part of the rapid deployment training for public information staff, the HIV/AIDS policy adviser in DPKO briefed personnel on their role in supporting HIV/AIDS programmes

In May, the UN Interim Administration in **Kosovo** (UNMIK) held training for HIV counselors, including local and international staff, UNMIK police and participants from the Kosovo police force and the national Institute of Public Health. The UNAIDS

HIV/AIDS policy adviser in DPKO visited UNMIK to assist with planning for voluntary counselling and testing and the broader HIV/AIDS programme in the mission. Preparation for voluntary counseling and testing facilities in other missions is ongoing.

The mission in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** has provided training to the first integrated Brigade of the newly constituted Armed Forces, including over 2,000 officers and troops. UNAIDS

SHR provided awareness cards for the military personnel and UNFPA Kinshasa office supplied 160,000 male condoms.

The HIV/AIDS awareness card for peacekeepers is now available in Chinese and is being translated into Nepalese bringing the number of languages available up to 12.



In Moldova, in the Army Health Day in May 2004, the youth association was providing young recruits with the training on condom use. The recruits are also provided with HIV/AIDS awareness card and a condom, which are part of the behaviour change communication materials of UNAIDS.