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JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS

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**Honduras**  
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## Country Situation

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Honduras has a generalized epidemic in the North Coast population, but it is concentrated in specific groups like MSM, SW, Prisoners and Garifunas, (with prevalence rates of more than 5%). HIV is mostly spread by sex. In 2007, prevalence was estimated to be 0.7 percent.

The population is very young (more than 40% is younger than 24 years old), predominantly urban and with a large segment of people living in poverty. Statistics are recording an increasing number of HIV and AIDS cases among women. Among those factors influencing women's vulnerability to HIV are: early initiation of sex, taboo related to sexuality, high rates of STD, gender inequalities, violence, including sexual violence and a huge rate of young mobile population. Although knowledge on HIV is high, the use of condoms is low in adults and adolescents. Honduras has the highest rate of pregnancy among adolescent girls in Central America and the need for education on reproductive health is not a complete reality because of the strong opposition of conservative and some religious groups.

Gender inequalities and stigma and discrimination are the most important obstacles to universal access to prevention treatment and support, especially for vulnerable groups.

Since 2002 the country is providing antiretroviral therapy, VCT and PMTCT services free of charge. More than 5 thousand PLWH have benefited (56%); the actual coverage of MTCT plus is 20%. The government is covering about 70% of antiretroviral therapy costs, but there is no plan or policy to make the AIDS program sustainable.

The National Strategic Plan for the next five years was elaborated with the participation of all sectors, based on evidence and budgeted. The Global Fund approved US\$ 45 million for the 3rd phase (for the next 6 years). The National Congress approved in its first debate the "curricula on sexual and reproductive health" to be implemented in schools by the Ministry of Education and the legal review of the National AIDS Coordinating Authority. Financial contribution from partners to civil society is increasing and the First Ladies Office is supporting the national HIV agenda and mobilizing additional resources.

## UNAIDS Support to the National Response

### UNAIDS activities at country level during 2007

- ▶ Continue supporting the "Three Ones" principles, especially the elaboration of the National Strategic Plan, evidence-based and budgeted.
- ▶ The CCM was supported in its operation and elaboration of the country proposal for the 3rd phase, which was approved by the next 6 years.
- ▶ Technical support to Platform of the Coalition of First Ladies and Women Leaders on HIV.
- ▶ Technical support to the UNGASS report.
- ▶ Work on universal access initiative.
- ▶ GIPA Project implemented in the most affected regions.
- ▶ Women organizations have been supported in social audit actions on HIV.
- ▶ Training on micro-enterprises for PLHIV.
- ▶ Celebration of World AIDS Day and massive dissemination of HIV information.
- ▶ Support to the review of analysis of the situation and MEGAS (NASA).
- ▶ Implementing the interagency initiative "Condoms Distribution Plan".
- ▶ Strategic discussion and evaluation of PMTCT.
- ▶ Support the information system of the HIV Department.
- ▶ Implement HIV and SRH plan in Education Secretary.
- ▶ Strengthened Municipal Programs on HIV prevention through friendly services for young people.
- ▶ Strengthened IEC strategies through mass media (TV, radio, press) and training on HIV and related issues addressed to journalists on a national level.

Advocacy agenda: review and approval of Organic Law of CONASIDA by National Congress; approval of sexual and reproductive health education guides and promotion of curricula development in the Ministry of Education; serious discussions on evidence-based prevention strategies promoting condom use and warning on the weakness of fidelity and abstinence; promotion of a multisectoral response based on the NSF and in a human rights context to create a supportive environment, free of stigma and discrimination to scaling-up universal access, greater involvement of civil society, including PLHIV and other vulnerable groups (i.e.

transgender and transsexual) in strategic discussions, mass media and UN information material elaboration.

## **UNAIDS achievements at country level during 2007**

### ***National strategic and operational planning***

A wide multisectoral participation has been developed that successfully carried on the elaboration of the National Strategic Plan, based on the analysis of the epidemic situation and the response, and based on evidence. Support was provided by UNAIDS/World Bank ASAP.

### ***Prevention***

The curricula on Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV has been strengthened with the National Congress's approval of the sexual education guides for teachers, even considering the opposition of some parliamentarians and strong national conservative groups to forbid these educational tools. UNAIDS mobilized cosponsors and international cooperation, positioning and lobbying with civil society and some governmental sectors to support the approval of the guides as well as to ensure that CONASIDA is recognized as the main authority to speak about sexual education and related issues, jointly with the Secretary of Education.

## **Main challenges / activities for 2008**

- ▶ Support a unified M&E national system in place under CONASIDA.
- ▶ Support the elaboration and implementation of the Annual Operation Plan 2008 of the National Strategic Plan on AIDS.
- ▶ Strengthening the Coalition of First Ladies and Women Leaders on HIV in Latin America, an opportunity for political influence and ensuring national responses in a human rights context.
- ▶ Work on the sustainability of prevention and treatment efforts of Honduras through resource mobilization and a tracking strategy.
- ▶ Strengthening the HIV response based on a human-rights approach to prevent vulnerable groups from stigma, discrimination and homophobia.
- ▶ Reinforce legal capacities for vulnerable groups, especially for homosexual groups and the net of positive women to ensure universal access.