

## Pakistan: Involvement of key policy makers in the fight against HIV

### Objective

To get maximum support of the parliamentarians for reducing stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV by building capacity; strengthening leadership; increasing awareness; and promoting partnerships.



Advocacy with International and National Parliamentarians

### Partners involved

- UNAIDS Pakistan
- Parliamentarians (Senate, National Assembly, Provincial Assemblies and District)
- Government of Pakistan (National and Provincial AIDS Control Programmes)
- Civil Society, Corporate Sector and Media

### Overview of the situation

Pakistan is a low prevalence but high-risk country for the spread of the HIV epidemic. According to official sources, there are currently 3073 HIV cases including 332 AIDS cases reported by September 2005. The actual number may be 30 times higher as the official numbers. Most reported cases are in the age group of 20-44 years, while males outnumber females by a ratio of 7-to-1. WHO and UNAIDS estimate that there are around 70,000 to 150,000 people living with HIV or AIDS in the country. Heterosexual transmission accounts for the majority of reported cases (67%). Other modes of transmission include: infection through contaminated blood and blood products (18%), homosexual or bisexual sex (6%), injecting drug users (4%), and mother to child transmission (1.3%)<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, it has been observed that the number of AIDS patient has increased in the recent past. HIV infection among drug users is worsening. It has been estimated that there are 60,000 IDUs in Pakistan of which 64% are reported to be sharing needles, 48% of the IDUs have been accounted as having sex with sex workers<sup>2</sup>. Adolescents are also becoming more and more vulnerable. However there exists no exact data.

Pakistan's parliamentary system is strong, active and representative. It is composed of the National Assembly (342 members

<sup>1</sup> National AIDS Control Programme

<sup>2</sup> UNODC, anti narcotic forces

out of which 73 are women), Senate (100 member out of which 18 are women), Punjab Provincial Assembly (371 members with 66 seats for women) Sindh Provincial Assembly (168 members with 29 seats for women) NWFP Provincial Assembly (124 member with 22 seats for women) and Balochistan Provincial Assembly (65 members with 11 seats for women).

### **Description**

UNAIDS and UNDP is supporting HIV programmes in Pakistan since June 2004. The initiative aims at building capacity; strengthening leadership; increasing awareness; and promoting partnerships. The project is designed to acquire support for the national response to the epidemic at all political levels. HIV awareness among key policy makers and political leaders at national, provincial and district levels would create an enabling environment for different partners working in HIV prevention and control in the public and the private sector.



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### **Deliverables**

- Mapping and identification of parliamentarians and key policy makers at national and provincial levels.
- Advocacy and orientation of parliamentarians at national, provincial and district levels, involving the media, civil society and the corporate sector.

### **Next steps**

- Establishment of parliamentary forums at national, provincial and district levels.
- Quarterly meetings of these forums

### **Contacts**

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