

World AIDS Day Joint Communique (Released November 30, 2007) of UNODC, UNAIDS, World Bank, WHO/AFRO

"HIV and Prisons in sub-Saharan Africa: Opportunities for Action"

Sub-Saharan Africa has been hardest hit by the epidemic with almost two-thirds of all people infected with HIV living in the region. Less is known in Africa about the prison community and HIV, than is known and done for many other most-at-risk groups. But the little information we have, clearly indicates that HIV prevalence is much higher in prisons than in the community, fuelling the epidemic within the community.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which is the lead organization for the prevention of HIV transmission in prisons, the World Bank's AIDS Campaign Team for Africa, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), assisted by the World Health Organization's regional office for Africa, worked together to produce "HIV and Prisons in sub-Saharan Africa: Opportunities for Action".

This document summarizes what is known, identifies gaps in information, and proposes ways forward to support this underserved population effectively through the main stream of sub-Saharan Africa HIV response.

On their way towards Universal Access to HIV Prevention, care and treatment, the countries must be in the lead and are the primary audience for this document. Multilateral, bilateral, and nongovernmental partners should join in building the evidences, in designing and implementing coordinated policies, strategies, and programs, to respond to needs.

"Opportunities for Action" is being used for the first time this World AIDS Day week in Mombasa at the "Regional Consultation on HIV Prevention and Care Among Injecting Drug Users and in Prison Settings in Eastern and Southern Africa".

This "living document", which will be improved as new information, experience and good practices are provided. It is currently available in English on the websites of the sponsoring organizations and will soon be available in French.