



## HIV VACCINES AND MICROBICIDES RESOURCE TRACKING WORKING GROUP

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### **Report Warns Flat Global Funding for HIV Prevention Research May Limit Ability of Researchers to Move Promising Approaches Forward**

VIENNA (20 July, 2010) – Following significant advances in vaccine and microbicide research, including results presented today of 39% efficacy in the CAPRISA 004 microbicide gel trial among women in South Africa, a new report released today warns that flat funding for HIV prevention research may limit researchers' ability to quickly move promising approaches forward.

The report examines investment in HIV prevention research in 2009 and finds that the onset of a global recession did not immediately impact funding levels for biomedical HIV prevention research. Total funding remained stable at approximately US\$1.165 billion for preventive vaccines, microbicides, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and operations research related to male circumcision.

In the face of an economic crisis that has deeply affected the economies and public-sector budgets of HIV prevention research funders, level funding for HIV prevention is cause for cautious optimism. Yet much of the 2009 funding was likely reflective of resources committed when the global economy was far healthier. As current funding commitments come to an end, the concern will be whether funders will be able to renew commitments at existing funding levels. Furthermore, the report authors argue that flat funding of HIV prevention research could have serious consequences for the field as results from critical prevention trials move the research agenda forward. They warn that researchers could have insufficient resources to advance important opportunities to prevent HIV.

*Advancing the Science in a Time of Fiscal Constraint: Funding for HIV Prevention Technologies in 2009*, the sixth annual report from the HIV Vaccines and Microbicides Resource Tracking Working Group, was released today at the XVIII International AIDS Conference in Vienna, Austria. It documents investments in biomedical HIV prevention research from public, philanthropic and commercial sectors in 2009. HIV vaccines continued to receive the majority of funding, with a total of US\$868 million, which was equal to 2008 funding levels. Investment in microbicides was US\$236 million, a decline of 3 percent from 2008 levels. Funding for oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) increased by 18 percent over 2008 levels to US\$52 million.

The stability in funding is encouraging, given a 10 percent decrease in funding for AIDS vaccine research seen in 2008, but the Working Group identified several areas of concern if funding remains flat, including escalating costs of late-stage clinical research, dependency on a small group of funders and a lack of diversity in funders. In addition, the Working Group stresses that the CAPRISA 004

results, while tremendously exciting, are by no means the definitive answer about antiretroviral-based microbicides and appropriately resourced confirmatory and exploratory research will be needed.

The Working Group has documented an overall trend since 2000 toward increased funding of new funders joining in the effort to support HIV prevention research. Yet in 2009, this funding stability was largely the result of increased or sustained funding by the U.S. National Institutes of Health and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which together accounted for 79 percent of vaccine funding, 59 percent of microbicide funding and 70 percent of PrEP funding.

“With five new infections, for every two people newly on treatment we cannot give up our quest for new HIV prevention tools” said Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS. “Investments for HIV prevention must be enhanced and sustained.”

“As we push for expanded funding and political commitments for HIV prevention research and the overall AIDS response, we must also work to find smart and innovative ways to make the best use of available funding to continue to scale up delivery of existing interventions and to look for new ones,” said Mitchell Warren executive director of AVAC. “HIV prevention researchers, advocates and donors must all commit to working together to ensure that we make the best and smartest use of limited resources, while also ensuring that the most promising interventions continue to move forward.”

Recent and upcoming results from several major studies could radically change the trajectory of HIV prevention research and increase the need for funding. These include the results of the RV144 Thai AIDS vaccine trial, which showed modest protection against HIV and scientifically demonstrated for the first time that an AIDS vaccine was possible, results from an important proof of concept microbicide trial CAPRISA 004, released yesterday at the Vienna AIDS conference, and anticipated results from two PrEP trials in the coming year.

“This is a very exciting time in HIV prevention research,” said Seth Berkley, President and CEO of the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative. “As the prevention research field is primed to exploit scientific advances availability and flexibility of funding will be critically important. Our ability to move discoveries into and to undertake even the most critical of these large-scale trials is at risk in the current funding environment.”

“We must work to continuously ensure resources are available to fulfill the promise of new scientific advances that could save millions of lives,” said Dr. Zeda Rosenberg, CEO of the International Partnership for Microbicides. “Microbicides, PrEP, vaccines and treatment-as-prevention are just beginning to show great promise for HIV prevention in large-scale trials. As we work together to develop these tools and transform our global health goals into reality, our success depends on having sufficient resources to keep pace with research developments in the field.”

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Since 2004, the *HIV Vaccines and Microbicides Resource Tracking Working Group* has generated estimates of research and development investment that can be compared year to year, from one HIV prevention technology to another, and across funding sources. This effort supports the 2001 United Nations General Assembly Special Session Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, which called for the development of sustainable and affordable prevention technologies, such as HIV vaccines and microbicides. Information collected in previous years has also been used by the Working Group and others to monitor levels of effort, to analyze the significance of investment trends, and to assess the impact of public policies aimed at accelerating scientific

progress.

The Working Group is composed of AVAC: Global Advocacy for HIV Prevention (AVAC), the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), the International Partnership for Microbicides (IPM), and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

More information is available online at [www.hivresourcetracking.org](http://www.hivresourcetracking.org).

**About AVAC:** AVAC is an international, non-profit organization that uses education, policy analysis, advocacy and community mobilization to accelerate the ethical development and eventual global delivery of AIDS vaccines and other new HIV prevention options as part of a comprehensive response to the pandemic. Please visit [www.avac.org](http://www.avac.org).

**About IAVI:** IAVI's mission is to ensure the development of safe, effective, accessible, preventive HIV vaccines for use throughout the world. Please visit [www.iavi.org](http://www.iavi.org).

**About IPM:** IPM is a nonprofit product development partnership dedicated to developing new HIV prevention technologies and making them available to women in developing countries. IPM has offices in the United States, South Africa and Belgium. Please visit [www.IPMglobal.org](http://www.IPMglobal.org).

**About UNAIDS:** UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, is an innovative partnership that leads and inspires the world in achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Please visit [www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org).