

## Press release

# WHO AND UNAIDS SECRETARIAT WELCOME CORROBORATING FINDINGS OF TRIALS ASSESSING IMPACT OF MALE CIRCUMCISION ON HIV RISK

**Geneva, 23 February 2007** -- The World Health Organization (WHO) and the UNAIDS Secretariat welcome the publication today in *The Lancet* of the detailed findings of two trials undertaken in Kenya and Uganda to determine whether male circumcision has a protective effect against acquiring HIV infection.

Funded by the US National Institutes of Health, the trials were terminated early on 12 December 2006 on the recommendation of their Data and Safety Monitoring Board. The findings of the two trials support the results of the South Africa Orange Farm Intervention Trial, funded by the French National Agency for Research on AIDS (ANRS), which were published in late 2005. Together the three studies, which enrolled more than 10 000 participants, provide compelling evidence of a 50 to 60% reduction in heterosexual HIV transmission to men.

"These findings are a very important contribution to HIV prevention science. Male circumcision has major potential for the prevention of HIV infection", said Kevin De Cock, Director of the WHO HIV/AIDS Department.

WHO and the UNAIDS Secretariat have convened an international consultation in early March to examine the results of the new trials and assess their policy and programmatic implications for countries. The consultation will address a range of policy, operational and ethical issues that will help guide decisions about where and how male circumcision can be best implemented, promoted and safely performed. Based on the recommendations of the experts, a statement will be issued.

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The objective of the **World Health Organization (WHO)** is the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health. Its work in HIV and AIDS is focused on the rapid scale up of treatment and care while accelerating prevention and strengthening health systems so that the health sector response to the epidemic is more effective and comprehensive. WHO defines and develops effective technical norms and guidelines, promotes partnership and provides strategic and technical support to Member States. The Organization also

contributes to the global AIDS knowledge base by supporting surveillance, monitoring and evaluation, reviewing the evidence for interventions and promoting the integration of research into health service delivery.

**The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)**, brings together the efforts and resources of ten UN system organizations to the global AIDS response. Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Based in Geneva, the UNAIDS secretariat works on the ground in more than 75 countries world wide. From joint programmes on AIDS to increasingly joint UN teams on AIDS in countries—UNAIDS brings together one UN strategy and helps coordinate the implementation and the division of labour between agencies. [www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org)