



UNAIDS Office on AIDS, Security and Humanitarian Response

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Annual Update 2003

IN FOCUS: UNAIDS and the DPKO report back to the Security Council on the response to the Resolution 1308.

The Security Council Resolution 1308, adopted on 17 July 2000, addresses the linkages between HIV/AIDS, peace and security. Following up on the implementation of the Resolution, the President of the Security Council (Angola) invited the Executive Director of UNAIDS and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations once again to provide oral reports on 17th of November 2003 on progress in implementing the Resolution.

All 15 Security Council members made statements and comments following the briefings by DPKO and UNAIDS, marking a growing commitment to the issue of HIV/AIDS and peace and security. The Council members endorsed and expressed full support for the collaboration between UNAIDS and DPKO in supporting Governments in the development of policies, strategies and programmes to address HIV/AIDS in this context.

All delegations welcomed the reports and expressed their satisfaction with progress to date, including the development of UNAIDS technical materials, with special emphasis on the Peer Education Kit for Uniformed Services and the placement of HIV/AIDS policy advisers or focal points at peacekeeping missions. Several delegations praised the efforts made in providing voluntary and confidential counseling and testing facilities at mission level. Some members called for solid monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and there was a request for an assessment of the link between human security and HIV/AIDS.

Due to the importance of this issue the Security Council has requested one substantive report from UNAIDS, DPKO and their partners on the progress made to address HIV/AIDS in the context of peace and security, along with suggestions for future action. SHR is working closely with DPKO on the development of this report which will form the basis of a more in-depth discussion on these issues in the Security Council in 2004.

National Security: Uniformed Services:

This year was marked by great developments in the work with uniformed services. This all culminated in September in the one day follow up meeting of United Nations General Assembly Special Session on AIDS (UNGASS), where the progress to date was reviewed and assessed. In the high level panel on HIV/AIDS and Security, UNAIDS launched its Global Initiative on “Engaging uniformed services in the fight against HIV/AIDS.”

Through this Initiative, UNAIDS has already facilitated partnerships with **50 countries** worldwide and has launched several important tools to support and sustain activities which address HIV/AIDS among uniformed service personnel. These include:

- **Guide for Developing and Implementing HIV/AIDS/STI Programming for Uniformed Services;**
- **Peer Education Kit for Uniformed Services;**
- **HIV/AIDS Awareness Card for Uniformed Services;**

Also launched at this occasion was the UNAIDS document entitled “*On the Frontline: A review of policies and programmes to address HIV/AIDS among peacekeepers and uniformed services*”. The UNAIDS Case Study on “*HIV/AIDS prevention and care among armed forces and UN peacekeepers: The case of Eritrea*” launched at ICASA in Nairobi was also presented at this briefing. SHR would like to acknowledge with thanks the contributions and support from Denmark, Ireland and Norway.

The following will provide an overview of the developments in the various regions where SHR operates:

Eastern Europe and Central Asia

The work with the uniformed services in Eastern Europe and Central Asia continued to expand strongly in year 2003, partnerships existing now with 14 countries. The conscript armies of the former Soviet Republics are facing changes as there are less young people voluntarily joining the services. The resources of the armies are more limited, which has an effect on the health care and social services provided to all the military staff and their

families, as well as the servicemen. The great interest expressed by various countries in HIV/AIDS programming for the military is partly a result of these trends, as well as the fact that this region is currently facing the fastest growing HIV epidemic in the world.

In January 2003 Dr. Ulf Kristoffersson, Director of SHR, was invited to address the annual meeting of the Central Committee of the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS) on the UNAIDS initiative on HIV/AIDS and Security. The presentations made on the achievements of the ongoing projects in **Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Russia** encouraged the other CIS countries to start similar activities among their uniformed services. Dr. Peter Piot had invited the CIS countries to make use of the resources developed by SHR in his letter of April 2003.

In 2003 the ongoing and new projects were focused on HIV/AIDS in the armed forces (**Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Ukraine and Uzbekistan**). The Ministry of Defence of the **Russian Federation** is also finalising a nation-wide project which focuses on HIV/AIDS awareness and education in its armed forces. In spring UNAIDS supported the training of Russian police peacekeepers by providing HIV awareness cards and condoms to the All-Russian Advanced Training Police Academy. UNAIDS is in the process of producing all the support materials in Russian.

In the Baltic States **Estonia** is the country with highest HIV prevalence in the region and is currently implementing an HIV awareness programme in its military with the support from USA. With rising HIV prevalence rates among the youth, **Latvia** and **Lithuania**, with the support of SHR, have prepared HIV awareness projects to cover all the uniformed services. Increasing its visibility in the region, SHR was invited to present its activities in December in the 6th International Conference on Military Medicine in Kaunas, Lithuania. Latvia launched its project activities in connection with the World AIDS day in December 2003. The same multi-faceted approach, including all the uniformed services, has been adopted by **Armenia and Tajikistan**, of which the first is launching a UNAIDS funded project in January 2004. **Turkey** is now considering developing training activities on HIV/AIDS in the police force, which is increasingly involved in work with vulnerable populations, such as drug users and sex workers.

The first results of the work on HIV/AIDS in uniformed services in Eastern Europe were reported in the case study on **Ukraine**. The Ukrainian Armed Forces, including the peacekeepers, started HIV/AIDS awareness training as early as 1999. UNAIDS has been supporting this activity from the beginning, making this action a nationwide activity in 2002-2003, targeting a total of 350,000 servicemen. The studies on the impact of these projects on behavioural change showed very positive results especially among the cadets, of whom 29,7% did not use condoms at all prior the training. However, a

follow-up study conducted six months later, after the training, showed this figure to be down to only 12,7%. Encouraged by the positive results, the other countries in the region are also integrating peer education activities into their HIV/AIDS programmes.

South and South-East Asia

In collaboration with UNAIDS Cosponsors and national partners, projects on HIV/AIDS prevention education for young men and women in uniform were started up in **Lao PDR** and **Myanmar** during 2003. The UNAIDS supported peer education project in the **Philippines** made good progress and completed training of trainers sessions for both police and the national armed forces. UNAIDS also worked with partners in **Cambodia** and **Viet Nam** to develop projects on HIV/AIDS prevention for the uniformed services.

The HIV/AIDS Awareness Card for national uniformed services was well received in several countries. It is already translated into Bahasa Indonesia, Thai and Vietnamese. In **Indonesia** and **Thailand** it will be distributed in connection with projects implemented by Family Health International (FHI) and national organisations. A Best Practice case study on the Royal Thai Army's response to HIV/AIDS was completed in Thai. The English version will be launched during 2004.

In terms of regional advocacy opportunities, UNAIDS participated in the 13th Annual Asia Pacific Military Medicine Conference (APMMC) held in Bangkok from 11 - 16 May 2003. The Conference included three sessions on HIV/AIDS where military representatives from, among other countries, Cambodia, **India**, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam as well as the USA shared experiences on HIV/AIDS policies and interventions with national uniformed services.

In addition, high-level advocacy meetings were held in Indonesia and Thailand. In Indonesia, the UNAIDS Executive Director, Peter Piot met with the Minister for Defence. In Thailand, the Director of SHR held talks with the Adviser to the Minister for Defence to discuss future collaboration between UNAIDS SHR and the Royal Thai Army. It is also worth noting that in Myanmar, the opposition leader and Nobel peace laureate, Aung San Sui Kyi, publicly expressed support to HIV/AIDS prevention interventions with the national police force.

Through an innovative partnership between the National AIDS Control Organization, UNAIDS, UNDP and the West Bengal State AIDS Prevention and Control Society, a project has been developed to reduce the HIV/AIDS vulnerability of Border Security Forces in **India**. It also aims to strengthen their capacity to expand outreach into the communities and families of recruits through integration of HIV/AIDS prevention and care into their existing goodwill programmes. Despite certain political unrest in 2003, UNAIDS is supporting the developing of a HIV/AIDS intervention package for the armed forces

and police in **Sri Lanka**. This package will consist of behaviour change communication, management of STI, and promotion and distribution of condoms.

National responses to HIV/AIDS vary greatly across the region and this is reflected in initiatives among national uniformed services. Some countries seem ready to tackle challenging issues such as mandatory HIV testing of personnel and dishonourable discharge for those found positive for STIs. In other countries the perception of condom promotion as a means to encourage promiscuous sexual behaviour prevails. In most countries there is support to institutionalise HIV/AIDS training for young recruits, but challenges may occur when the commitments have to be formalised into, for example, written agreements with senior personnel among the uniformed services. However, one of the important lessons learned at this stage of project implementation is that the national uniformed services in South-East Asia, in general, are very open towards HIV/AIDS programming concepts for their personnel.

Latin America and the Caribbean

In the second Forum on HIV/AIDS/STD in Latin America and the Caribbean (April 7-12, 2003), a separate sub-group was organised to discuss HIV/AIDS in uniformed services. The participating countries expressed keen interest in building the capacity of their national uniformed services to combat the epidemic. In response to this UNAIDS/SHR recruited a regional advisor for HIV/AIDS activities among uniformed services in Latin America and the Caribbean. While Latin America still has relatively low HIV prevalence rates, there is now a window of opportunity to take initiative on prevention activities and to use the uniformed services as a resource and key advocates on HIV awareness.

In terms of regional advocacy, a number of meetings have been held with representatives from parts of the uniformed services in different countries. These meetings have provided a good opportunity for UNAIDS/SHR to encourage further commitment from the countries in the region. In September 2003, a meeting was held with the **Brazilian Armed Forces**. The meeting was instrumental in strengthening the collaboration between UNAIDS/SHR and the Latin American Commission on AIDS Prevention and Control (COPRECOS).

In October meetings were held in Panama with the Minister of Health, the General Director of the Police, and the General Director of the National Marine Services. Project proposals to address HIV/AIDS in the **Panama** police force and National Marine Services are now in the process of being drawn up. A workshop on a strategic plan for the development of project proposals for preventive HIV/AIDS interventions among uniformed services in Central America was also held and attended by representatives of the uniformed services in Honduras, Guatemala, Panama and the Dominican Republic.

Currently Guatemala is preparing a project proposal for its uniformed services.

In November, the SHR Director and the SHR regional focal point attended the III Pan-American Congress on Military Medicine in Santiago de Chile, Chile, which confirmed the uniformed services' commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

A historical agreement between UNAIDS/SHR and the Uruguayan government was signed on the International AIDS Day, 1 December 2003. In this agreement the **Uruguayan government** represented by the, Ministry of National Defense, Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of the Interior committed to develop a national response programme for HIV/AIDS prevention among the uniformed services in collaboration with UNAIDS/SHR.

The 8th World STI/AIDS Congress was held in Punta del Este in Uruguay in December. During the conference a plenary session and workshop focussing on HIV/AIDS and security was held and the UNAIDS/SHR project proposal for interventions among uniformed services was presented.

Given the recent establishment of a focal point for Latin American and the Caribbean to deal with HIV/AIDS and the uniformed services only few projects have yet been implemented. However, there are signs of a successful beginning with a number of projects currently underway and the commitment of government officials from various countries in the region to further the efforts of UNAIDS and its cosponsors in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Among the planned projects is a project in Uruguay, which will include police and military personnel, young recruits and peacekeepers. Also in **Chile**, a project, which will focus on young recruits, is in process. In addition, **Colombia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Honduras** are currently developing project proposals for their uniformed services and in the **Dominican Republic, Haiti, Perú and Argentina** the local focal points are organizing official meetings for the coming months to present project proposals to the National Authorities in their respective countries.

Sub-Saharan Africa

In the past year, support was provided to 15 selected countries in addition to subregional and regional efforts to coordinate and harmonize HIV/AIDS responses among uniformed services from sub-Saharan countries.

Projects supported by SHR are currently being implemented in **Burundi, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Central African Republic (CAR)**. A project proposal from Eritrea has been submitted to SHR for funding. Projects have been finalized and are in the process of being submitted to SHR through the UNTGs in **Angola, Malawi, Rwanda,**

Ivory Coast, Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria. Project proposals from Swaziland and Tanzania have been initiated but are not finalised.

Some highlights from these projects include:

The end of the first phase of the project in **Burundi** marks a visible success for the multi sector initiative on HIV/AIDS, comprising of the armed forces, police and border guards, supported actively by UNESCO.

Decentralized HIV/AIDS peer education training and care and support among armed forces in post conflict environments is the main focus of the projects being supported and implemented in **DRC** through UNDP, in Congo through WHO and in **CAR** through WHO.

Demobilization in **Angola, Ivory Coast and Rwanda** has presented important opportunities for peer education training and condom promotion which is the basis for each of the projects proposed through UNDP/PSI.

In **Malawi** where HIV prevalence is high, a proposal has been developed to incorporate HIV/AIDS into the training curriculum of the Malawi Armed Forces College (MAFCO) through the coordinating support of UNDP.

The publication in September of the UNAIDS SHR Case Study demonstrating lessons learned from the individual and joint efforts by the Eritrean Defence Force (EDF) and the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) revealed the importance of engaging armed forces, in the fight against AIDS in a post conflict environment. This experience also revealed the need for comprehensive VCT management within the EDF which forms the basis for the project proposal submitted to SHR for partial funding.

Following the East Africa workshop on HIV/AIDS and Armed Forces organised by UNAIDS SHR in July, projects have been developed focusing on peer education training among young recruits and surrounding

communities, including Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs).

A unique project has been proposed by the **Nigerian Armed Forces** to target future peacekeepers with a comprehensive HIV/AIDS pre-deployment training, especially important when considering that a recent study showed that 42% of Nigerian soldiers are involved in peacekeeping missions.

A critical element to responding to HIV/AIDS among uniformed services in sub-Saharan Africa has been ensuring cooperation at sub regional and regional levels through the establishment of networks and strengthened advocacy for leadership. This is becoming especially important in light of the increased role of regional peacekeeping in Africa. In this regard, regional forums such as ICASA held in Nairobi in September and the Pan African Congress on Military Medicine (PACMM) held in Accra in November have been used as important platforms to advocate for greater involvement, commitment and leadership among uniformed services in the fight against HIV/AIDS. More notably, SHR has been working with the SADC Inter State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) to identify areas for harmonised responses to HIV/AIDS policies and programmes within the defence sectors of the 14 SADC countries.

Another important element for ensuring strengthened response among uniformed services has been the development of key partnerships at all levels. These have included: (i) close collaboration at country level with the US DOD, particularly at the occasion of the All Africa Military HIV/AIDS Workshop organised by the US DOD in September in Botswana; (ii) close collaboration at the regional level with CHGA through its Peace and Security Task Force, particularly in relation to the African Union and the development of its Stand By Force (SBF); (iii) close collaboration with civil society groups and networks including the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and the Governance and AIDS Initiative (GAIN).

International Security: Peacekeeping Operations:

UNAIDS/DPKO

In January 2003, an HIV/AIDS policy adviser sponsored by UNAIDS, was placed in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to draft policy and systematise mission awareness and prevention programmes. The appointment was commended by the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. DPKO has four mission level HIV/AIDS policy advisers, supported by UN volunteers, and a fifth is being recruited for Liberia. There are six HIV/AIDS focal points in other missions, and others are being identified in remaining operations.

DPKO established an HIV/AIDS Trust Fund for peacekeeping, based on a donation from Denmark raised by UNAIDS. It is being used to facilitate four main programme areas: voluntary confidential counselling and testing (VCCT) centres in mission areas; collaborative local projects that address the interaction between peacekeepers and vulnerable groups; training workshops for HIV/AIDS policy advisers and focal points in order to maintain the standard of knowledge and training capabilities; and data collection, including knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) surveys, programme assessments and fact-finding missions.

A workshop in Sierra Leone in March brought together the DPKO and mission level HIV/AIDS policy advisers to exchange expertise and discuss future areas of collaboration. A joint UNAIDS–DPKO workshop is planned for March 2004 for all HIV/AIDS policy advisers and focal points.

VCCT

DPKO is in the last stages of finalising its policy on HIV testing, underscoring its support for VCCT. The UNAIDS/DPKO HIV/AIDS policy adviser has met individually with a number of Member States and key troop contributing countries to review and discuss the policy.

DPKO has already begun establishing VCCT facilities in missions. Testing and counselling was made available in Timor Leste in February and in Ethiopia and Eritrea in November. In October, the DPKO-based HIV/AIDS policy adviser conducted a mission assessment to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to assist with the planning for VCCT. Similar programmes are being planned in other missions.

In autumn, the mission in Timor Leste held a six-week programme of positive ‘living testimonies’ by an HIV-positive counsellor. The reception was very positive, with a significant increase in the number of people requesting VCCT. It included a special peer education project for the Timorese police force and local NGOs, in collaboration with Family Health International.

Pre-deployment training

The HIV/AIDS policy adviser in the DRC participated in the training of Namibian troops being deployed to Liberia, while the Ethiopia–Eritrea (UNMEE) HIV/AIDS policy adviser assisted with an equivalent programme for Ethiopian peacekeepers.

In mid-May, following a request from the Finnish contingent due to be deployed to UNMEE, the Director

of SHR presented to troops on HIV/AIDS risks in the field and prevention initiatives. The training included a session on gender sensitisation, led by Ms. Elisabeth Rehn, former UN Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The training session was well received, and encouraged SHR to plan similar activities in future.

UNAIDS and DPKO are continuing discussions on how to strengthen pre-deployment training.

Awareness cards

SHR distributed the awareness cards for peacekeepers in missions and direct to troop contributing countries. Cards were distributed to Ukraine, with plans for the military to produce it themselves. The Russian Federal Police Peacekeeping Training Centre, which is responsible for the training of police and border police officers for UN missions, also requested awareness cards. In addition, the Bangladesh military has been provided with DPKO/UNAIDS awareness cards. The awareness cards will be distributed at the pre-departure HIV programmes for peacekeeping soldiers.

DPKO commitments

At the briefing to the Security Council on Resolution 1308, DPKO’s Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping, Mr Jean-Marie Guéhenno, made a number of commitments for the coming year. First, to deploy HIV/AIDS policy advisers in all major peacekeeping operations and identify HIV/AIDS focal points in remaining missions. Second, to establish and maintain VCCT facilities in all missions. Finally third, to increase the number of mission assessments and to develop monitoring and evaluation tools with UNAIDS.

UNAIDS will continue to provide technical support to the policy advisers and DPKO in order to institutionalise HIV/AIDS awareness, care and support interventions among peacekeeping missions.

Humanitarian Response:

Food Security

Throughout 2003 the SHR focal point for Sub Saharan Africa continued to support the UNAIDS response to the food crisis in Southern Africa. However UNAIDS has now **established a permanent office in RIACSO** (Regional Inter Agency Coordination Support Office for the Southern Africa Crisis) with the aim of strengthening its role and capacity to: (1) ensure that HIV/AIDS is addressed as a cross-cutting priority in the current humanitarian response, and to (2) ensure that co-sponsors and partners in the region are responding adequately to

the issues of HIV/AIDS as an underlying factor in this chronic emergency.

Refugees

In view of the spontaneous and impending voluntary repatriation of Angola refugees from refugee camps in DRC, Namibia and Zambia, UNHCR and UNAIDS are working together to strengthening the response to HIV/AIDS in refugee camps in these countries and in the transit centres in Angola. A joint proposal has been prepared for funding the activities.

Gender

SHR and UNIFEM have renewed their collaboration in 2003 to support an HIV/AIDS Gender Advisor in **Sierra Leone** to focus on women and girls affected by the post conflict situation. Similar collaboration on the recruitment of HIV/AIDS Gender Advisors for other conflict zones or peacekeeping missions such as **Angola** and **DRC** has also been initiated.

Children

As children are often adversely affected by both conflict and HIV UNAIDS, UNICEF and Save the Children carried out a study in the Great Lakes region to establish why the current humanitarian response is inadequate in a region where conflict and HIV overlap significantly. The report of this study is currently being published.

United Nations Staff

UNAIDS/SHR is currently working with the UN Joint Medical Services to establish areas of collaboration in

order to mitigate the effects of HIV/AIDS among United Nations staff world wide. One primary area of collaboration is the development of Peer education Kit for and a HIV/AIDS awareness card for UN employees.

Taskforce on HIV/AIDS in Emergency Settings

SHR is an active member in the IASC Task Force on HIV/AIDS in emergencies. This Task Force is mandated to facilitate inter-agency work for the control of HIV/AIDS in emergency settings. The Taskforce recently completed the first redraft of the Guidelines for HIV/AIDS interventions in Emergencies Settings. The Taskforce has also established a sub working group on Advocacy led by UNAIDS which is currently developing tools/messages to advocate for increased political commitment and increased accountability among donor governments and the international community to fight HIV/AIDS in emergency settings.