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Regional Plan to be launched in November

A new regional plan aimed at helping Latin America and the Caribbean halt and reverse the spread of HIV by 2015, as called for Goal 6 of the Millennium Declaration, will be launched on November 10, during the CONCASIDA/Foro congress in El Salvador. Successfully implemented, the *Regional HIV/STI Plan for the Health Sector 2006–2015* will help prevent some 1.4 million new HIV infections between now and 2015 and help save some 300,000 lives. The development of the Plan was a participatory process, coordinated by PAHO, involving the ministries of health and national AIDS programs, development organizations, people with HIV, and civil society.

The Regional Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy to scale up HIV/AIDS care in the region, with three main targets: a) Universal access to comprehensive HIV care, including prevention and antiretroviral treatment, by 2010; b) a 50 percent reduction in the number of new HIV infections between now and 2010, and an additional 50 percent decline between 2010 and 2015; and c) a reduction in the incidence of mother-to-child HIV transmission to less than 5 percent by the year 2015, as well as a reduction of the incidence of congenital syphilis to fewer than 0.5 cases per 1,000 live births. To achieve these targets, the Plan has five critical lines of action that constitute the elements of an effective response. More: www.paho.org/aids (available by November 10)

Editorial: *Let's change the face of HIV in the Americas*

The Regional HIV/STI Plan for the Health Sector comes at a critical time. We are now on the threshold of universal access to treatment and comprehensive care in the Region, and have instruments to reach every group with information and communication for behavioral change. We have the tools in hand to open the door and change the face of HIV in the Americas. Let us harness the healing power of available knowledge and technologies and make them work for those in our Region who need them most.

Mirta Roses Periago, Director, Pan American Health Organization

Eleven Countries Obtain Discounts for Antiretrovirals

Negotiations between 11 Latin American countries and 26 pharmaceutical companies on price reductions for antiretrovirals could result in a 15 to 55 percent price reduction for the treatment regimens most commonly used in the Region. A basic treatment regimen (AZT+3TC+NVP), which costs US\$ 350 per year per patient, could be as low as US\$ 241. For a more complex therapy (D4T+DDI+LPV/RTV), the cost of US\$ 2,489 could be reduced by 55% (to US\$ 1,123). The negotiations, which took place in August in Argentina, will allow cutting spending on antiretrovirals by 9 to 66 percent. More:
<http://www.paho.org/English/DD/PIN/pr050805.htm>

New Bulletin Updates Number of AIDS Cases in the Hemisphere

As of June 2005, a cumulative total of 1,540,414 cases of AIDS have been reported in the Americas, of which 30,690 were pediatric cases (children under 15 years of age). Since 1986, there have been a total of 771,680 deaths due to AIDS. It is estimated that these figures are lower than the real ones because final information for the period 2003-2005 is still not available. The data can be found in the last edition of Surveillance of AIDS in the Americas (July 2005), published by PAHO. The bulletin has a new format and new sections. In addition to AIDS cases, it now provides information on antiretroviral coverage, STI and TB/HIV co-infection. More:
http://www.paho.org/Spanish/AD/FCH/AI/Vigilancia_del_Sida_en_las_Americas_Junio_2005.pdf
(Spanish only)

Epidemiological Surveillance Enters the Era of ARV

Two technical meetings in the region aimed at strengthening the information systems that support patient tracking and monitoring. Some countries already have information systems of this type, while in others they are in an initial stage. In both cases, it is important to establish standardized guidelines at the national and regional levels in order to carry out this process. Organized by PAHO, UNAIDS, CDC, and the ministries of health of the host countries, the meetings took place in Honduras (July) and in Peru (September).

PAHO Host Consultation on Clinical Staging of HIV and HIV Case Definitions

The objectives of the consultation are to familiarize regional experts with the revised WHO HIV clinical staging system and HIV/AIDS case definitions. The meeting (October 26 and 27, Washington DC) constitutes the last of the WHO regional consultations on the issue. It is expected that participants will provide suggestions to the HIV clinical staging system and HIV/AIDS case definitions that reflect the needs and realities of the countries of the Americas. Another outcome will be recommendations on practical steps to improve the use of the HIV clinical staging system and on HIV related reporting. To see the results of a similar consultation for the African region, go to:
<http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/guidelines/casedefinitions/en/>

Information Sought on Interventions to Reduce Stigma in the Health Sector

PAHO and the University of Puerto Rico are developing a study to identify interventions to reduce HIV-related stigma in the health sector. They ask that people and institutions working with the subject to fill out an information form providing details of their activities. There is special interest in learning about interventions, workshops, or trainings that are carried out

with health professionals on the subject of stigma. The results of the study will be disseminated throughout the region. To obtain a copy of the information form, please send a message to sida@paho.org. For PAHO materials on stigma in the health sector, go to: <http://www.paho.org/english/AD/FCH/AI/stigma-l.htm>

Caribbean Countries to Promote Know Your Status Campaigns

HIV prevention and communication experts from ten countries participated in the workshop “A Caribbean Approach to Know your Status Campaigns” in April in Suriname. Know Your Status campaigns aim to increase demand for VCT and treatment from both vulnerable groups and the general population. The workshop was organized by PAHO/WHO and sought to identify opportunities and challenges for these campaigns in the region. Some countries reported having fewer people seeking testing than expected. Barriers for this behavior include stigma and discrimination, but also involve a number of complex factors which need to be better understood. The recommendations of the workshop can be obtained through sida@paho.org

Journalists get awards for HIV stories

PAHO and partner organizations awarded six journalists for their coverage of the epidemic. In Latin America, Colombian journalist Carlos Dáguer received the first prize of the Latin American Award of Health Journalism for “Enseñar al que no sabe” (“Teaching Those Who Don’t Know”), an article about children living with HIV published in the newsmagazine *Cambio*. The award was created by RED SALUD, a partnership of PAHO, the Communication Initiative and the Foundation for New Ibero-American Journalism. Other journalists awarded were Juan Carlos Rivera, from *Ahora la Salud* (Argentina) and Juan Luis Salinas, from *El Mercurio* (Chile). In the Caribbean, the first place was shared between Bruce Paddington, from TV production company Banyna (Trinidad and Tobago) and a team of writers from *The Gleaner* (Jamaica), Patricia Watson and Trudy Simpson. The 2005 edition of the HIV/AIDS Caribbean Media Award was sponsored by CARICOM and PAHO/CAREC. More: http://www.comunit.com/la/reds salud/awards/award_mhp.php (Latin American award) and <http://cpc-paho.org/whatsnew/mediaawards/2004/2004%20awards%20main.htm> (Caribbean award)

PAHO Explores Linkages between HIV and Sexual and Domestic Violence

PAHO launched a pilot project in Belize, Honduras, and Nicaragua that examines local networks of domestic and sexual violence clinics as an entry point for HIV treatment and prevention. As the relationship between sexual and domestic violence and HIV becomes clearer, it is critical to develop strategies to jointly target these two serious health problems that disproportionately affect women and girls. Domestic and sexual violence continue to be part of the daily lives of women: 10% of women in Nicaragua report being victims of sexual violence perpetrated by their partners, and the majority of young women report being coerced into their first sexual experience. The project will work with local treatment, care and prevention networks in the three countries. More: <http://www.paho.org/English/AD/GE/VAW.htm>

From Alaska to Argentina, Cyclists Raise HIV Awareness

Extreme sportsman Joachim Franz of Germany and a team of five other cyclists set a Pan American record by cycling 30,000 kilometers from Alaska to the southern tip of Argentina in an effort to raise awareness and funds to fight the global HIV epidemic. Citizens from towns and cities along their route turned out to support the Pan American AIDS Awareness Expedition 2005. In several countries, local PAHO offices provided logistical and other support, organizing press conferences and special events. The team took 39 days to travel from Deadhorse, Alaska, to Ushuaía, Argentina, the hemisphere’s southernmost town. The trek across 13 countries inspired radio, television and print media coverage that called attention to the global HIV epidemic and the needs of the 1.5 million people in the Americas

who have HIV. The expedition was cosponsored by UNAIDS. More: <http://www.paho.org/English/DD/PIN/pr050825.htm>

Mexico hosts workshop on sexual health for MSM

Puebla, Mexico, was the site chosen for the first Latin American *Face to Face: Man to Man* sexual health workshop developed by PAHO and the University of Minnesota. Fifty health and human service workers and program directors attended the workshop last May, together with community leaders who work or plan to work in HIV prevention and care with MSM and gay men. The workshop reviewed the major health models underpinning traditional HIV prevention interventions and proposed an emerging *Sexual Health Model* that goes beyond highly cognitive-behavioral models. Mexican counterparts for the initiative were the Institute of Social Security and the National AIDS Program (CENSIDA). PAHO now plans to offer the workshop to other countries in the region.

UN Forms Group to Support 3 by 5 in Haiti

UN agencies in Haiti have formed a working group to support the scale-up of ART. The goal is to promote synergy among the agencies in the areas of treatment and care and also to improve coordination with local authorities and NGOs. Convened by PAHO, and composed of UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, UNAIDS and the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (peacekeepers), the "3 by 5 Group" identified two departments for intensified joint support, Nord Ouest and Nord Est. Because of the positive impact of a first joint visit to Nord Ouest, other partners announced plans to join the group. A report on the visit to Nord Ouest is available through sida@paho.org. More information on Haiti: <http://www.paho.org/English/DD/PED/haitisituation2004.htm>

PAHO/DFID Project in Bolivia Concludes After Five Years

A five-year HIV project funded by DFID and implemented by PAHO in Bolivia is coming to an end this semester. Among several accomplishments, the US\$ 600,000 project implemented the first Bolivian sentinel surveillance site in a vulnerable population (STI patients), in collaboration with the NGO SexSalud,. In addition, it led to several behavioral surveillance studies, laboratory follow up of people under ART, development of community based groups and implementation of studies and interventions in vulnerable populations (adolescents, long distance truck drivers, and MSM). The partnership sought the empowerment of people with HIV and improvement of human rights. An article with highlights of the project (Spanish only) is available through sida@paho.org

PAHO Assists T&T in Developing HIV Communication Plan

Communication stakeholders and government communication officers from T&T participated in a three-day workshop entitled "Developing the HIV/AIDS Communication Plan for Trinidad and Tobago". The workshop, which was convened by the National AIDS Coordinating Committee and facilitated by PAHO, sought to establish the basis for an HIV communication strategy for the country and to strengthen collaboration among communication stakeholders for sustained planning, management, and monitoring of HIV communication. A report is available through sida@paho.org

NGO Awards PAHO's Panama Office

The PAHO office in Panama received an award from PROBIDSIDA for its work in the response to the epidemic. This recognition is the result of a series of activities that the office is carrying out in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, the UN System and the civil society. PROBIDSIDA is an NGO consisting of people with HIV and community volunteers. More: www.ops-oms.org.pa/docs/probidsida.pdf (Spanish only).

New Staff Join PAHO's Response to HIV

New and recently reassigned international PAHO staff working on HIV includes Bertha

Gomes (from Colombia) and Maria Dolores Perez-Rosales (from Spain), as 3 by 5 Project managers for the Andean Area and Central America, respectively. The Washington office was joined by Bilali Camara (from Mali, and former head of CAREC's SPSSTI program), who will focus on the information and knowledge management, Michèle Ooms (from France), who will work on institutional development, and Monica Alonso (from Spain), who will work on care and prevention, including quality and adherence. Several countries in the region have new 3 by 5 consultants, thanks to funds from CAREC and the 3 by 5 Initiative. To welcome these professionals, PAHO conducted three orientations: in Central America (July), Caribbean (October) and Andean region (October). PAHO professionals involved in the response to HIV will join the meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee, initially scheduled for January 2006 in Brazil.

PAHO Launches Training Manual in Management of Adults

In order to contribute to a more comprehensive training for primary care professionals (both health professionals and of general services) in the care of people with HIV, PAHO launched *Manual de capacitación en el manejo integral de personas adultas que viven con el VIH/sida para equipos de atención primaria y comunitarios en Latinoamérica y el Caribe* ("Training Manual in comprehensive management of adults who live with the HIV/AIDS for primary care and community groups in Latin America and the Caribbean"). The publication, which had the support of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation, is structured in 17 chapters, which cover all the topics related to the management of the people who live with the HIV.

MORE information: <http://www.paho.org/Spanish/AD/FCH/AI/Manual%20capacitacion%20manejo%20PVVS%202004.pdf> (Spanish only).

New Publications from WHO available

- *WHO consultation on technical and operational recommendations for scale-up of laboratory services and monitoring HIV antiretroviral therapy in resource-limited settings* <http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/meetingreports/scaleup/en/index.html> (English)
- *Scaling-up HIV testing and counselling services: A toolkit for programme managers* <http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/vct/toolkit/en/index.html> (English)
- *Joint ILO/WHO guidelines on health services and HIV/AIDS* http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/prev_care/healthservices/en/index.html (English and Spanish)
- *Evidence for action on HIV/AIDS and injecting drug use/Policy brief: antiretroviral therapy and injecting drug users* <http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/idu/idupolicybriefs/en/index.html> (English)
- *Progress on global access to HIV antiretroviral therapy, an update on "3 by 5", June 2005* <http://www.who.int/3by5/publications/progressreport/en/index.html> (English and Spanish)

All publications can be ordered through the information center or accessed electronically at <http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/en/>

CALENDARIO has 1,000 Viewers a Month

The numbers of viewers of the interinstitutional calendar of HIV events in Latin America and the Caribbean reached a 1,000 people a month. The "CALENDARIO" has on average 12 events of regional and national interest every month. Current partners are Agencia AIDS, Agua Buena, ICWLAC, UNAIDS, PAHO/WHO, PASCA, REDLA, UNFPA and UNICEF. More: <http://www.calsplus.com/sida>

Most Frequently Used HIV Acronyms

http://www.paho.org/English/AD/FCH/AI/Acronym_hivAIDS.pdf

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