

DHAKA DECLARATION OF ACTION

Second Sub-Regional Parliamentary Seminar on HIV/AIDS in South Asia

Dhaka, Bangladesh - 26-27 January 2006

- **Re-affirming** our commitment to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those set out in the:
 - *Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development* (ICPD, September 1994).
 - *Millennium Declaration* agreed at the United Nations Millennium Summit (September 2000).
 - *Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS* adopted at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (June 2001).
 - *Kathmandu Call Against HIV/AIDS in South Asia: Accelerating Actions and Results* agreed at the UNAIDS/UNICEF High-Level HIV/AIDS Meeting (February 2003).
 - *World Summit Outcome Document* adopted at the World Summit (September 2005).
- **Recalling** our commitment to the Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) Islamabad Declaration of Action (January 2005).
- **Recognizing** that AIDS is one of the greatest threats to the future development of poor countries, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and global security.
- **Noting** with great concern that in South and South-East Asia 7.4 million people are living with HIV¹.
- **Regretting** the fact that globally, less than one in five people at risk of becoming infected with HIV has access to basic prevention services.
- **Expressing** concern that HIV prevention efforts are failing to meet the needs of women and young people.
- **Noting** that many countries in South Asia are experiencing a low national HIV prevalence, with significantly higher rates among vulnerable key populations engaging in high-risk behavior.
- **Acknowledging** that now is the time to scale up evidence-based HIV prevention programs to limit HIV transmission within and beyond networks of high-risk behavior.
- **Expressing** grave concern that only one in seven Asians has access to anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) and that the price of second-line ARVs is prohibitively high.
- **Emphasizing** that the linkages between HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health programs should be strengthened in order to improve coverage of comprehensive HIV services and achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015, as agreed at the ICPD.
- **Stressing** the vital role of parliamentarians in adopting rights-based HIV legislation, raising awareness in the community and mobilizing increased financial support for HIV/AIDS programs.

We, the participants of the PGA Second Sub-Regional Parliamentary Seminar on HIV/AIDS in South Asia, held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, 26-27 January 2006, hereby agree to:

1. **Mobilize** the political will needed to develop a package for integrated and comprehensive HIV prevention, treatment and care with the aim of coming as close as possible to the goal of universal access to treatment by 2010 for all those who need it.
2. **Partner** immediately with a range of stakeholders, including national AIDS coordination authorities, ministries of health, civil society organizations, pharmaceutical companies, and people living with HIV and AIDS, in developing nationally agreed, targeted plans for building comprehensive AIDS programmes.

¹ "AIDS Epidemic Update 2005", UNAIDS/WHO.

3. **Review** and reform legal frameworks to safeguard and respect the rights of people living with HIV and AIDS, including families with a particular emphasis on youth, and reduce stigma and discrimination.
4. **Develop** a national coordination framework to galvanize a concerted, multi-sectoral effort.
5. **Move and/or endeavor to enact** legislation to address the underlying causes, which heighten vulnerability to HIV, such as gender inequality, human rights abuses and social marginalization.
6. **Integrate** national AIDS programmes into country development processes and frameworks, including Poverty Reduction Strategies.
7. **Incorporate** measures to protect and promote sexual and reproductive health and rights and to mitigate gender-based violence in national and regional policies.
8. **Increase** sustained financial support for scaled-up rights-based HIV/AIDS programs, including access to affordable treatment for all affected groups, particularly children
9. **Ensure** national programmes meet health, education, and economic needs of AIDS orphans.
10. **Support** the implementation of the “Three Ones” to improve the coordination and harmonization of efforts to address HIV and AIDS through the continuum of prevention, treatment, care and support.
11. **Exercise** scrutiny over the effective implementation of national HIV/AIDS policy and disbursement of funding.
12. **Strengthen** health systems to ensure universal access to basic health services and supplies, including services to promote sexual and reproductive health and combat HIV.
13. **Address** the shortage of human resources in the health sector, including supporting the recruitment, training and retention of skilled medical personnel.
14. **Mobilize** support and advocacy for the development of new prevention technologies, including vaccines, female-controlled microbicides and post-exposure prophylaxis.
15. **Support** exploration of reliable alternative indigenous treatments and ensure the medical safety of individuals volunteering for clinical trials of vaccine initiatives.
16. **Ensure** that bi-lateral and multi-lateral trade agreements, including WTO, [TRIPS] and their implementation are not a barrier to increased access to affordable ARV treatment, in particular to ensure that other universal United Nation’s conventions are respected.
17. **Engage** constituents, the media, civil society and the private sector on the HIV challenge in South Asia by disseminating this Declaration as a discussion point, initiating dialogue and confronting the stigma and discrimination facing people living with HIV and AIDS.
18. **Participate** actively in the quinquennial review of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (May - June 2006) and in preliminary consultations with country-level stakeholders.
19. **Form** national all-party parliamentary networks and groups on HIV/AIDS, where appropriate, to review legislation, provide a forum for discussion and generate increased political and financial support.
20. **Set** nationally agreed goals in pursuit of this Declaration, including a stated number of parliamentary resolutions on HIV/AIDS, a number of parliamentary debates on HIV/AIDS and concrete steps to be taken to deliver on financial commitments.
21. **Establish** mechanisms at the provincial, national and sub-regional levels to monitor the implementation of this Declaration of Action, including follow-up exchanges and workshops.

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