INTER–AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP
52nd MEETING

12-13 March 2003

FAO Headquarters, Rome
Philippine Room (C277)

IASC Task Force on HIVAIDS in Emergency Settings: Draft Advocacy Strategy

Circulated: 26 February 2003

## BACKGROUND

At its monthly meeting on 28 January, the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Taskforce (TF) on HIV/AIDS in Emergency Settings decided to establish a sub-working group on advocacy in order to raise both political and financial support for efforts to respond to the pandemic in emergency settings.

This decision follows a call by the IASC at its plenary meeting on 9 December 2002 for "a strong advocacy campaign by the IASC members together with UNAIDS and other relevant actors (to) aim at breaking the silence of the local governments and to focus on the donors, local governments and the civil society." As a first step in this effort, IASC agency heads issued a joint public statement calling on the international community "to respond appropriately to the human tragedy now unfolding in Southern Africa."

## DEFINING THE PROBLEM

The humanitarian crisis in southern Africa in recent months dramatically underscored the exponential impact of HIV/AIDS in emergency settings. It has become grimly evident that HIV/AIDS was not just a factor against a backdrop of overall food insecurity, but was one of the fundamental underlying causes of the crisis, as well as an effect. In their mission report to the region, dated 4 February, Messrs Morris and Lewis defined the problem: "The world knows that HIV/AIDS is fatal. The world also knows that southern Africa, where some of the highest HIV prevalence rates are found, has suffered from food shortages affecting millions of impoverished people. But the world clearly does not realize the immediate and long-term implications of a crisis caused by the conjunction of HIV/AIDS with chronic poverty, erratic rainfall and natural resource degradation or the urgent need it signals for a profound shift in humanitarian and developmental strategies."

It is such a shift in strategies that lies at the core of the IASC Reference Group's mandate. The Sub-working Group on Advocacy held its initial meeting on 12 February to discuss measures that could be taken jointly by IASC members to ensure new and dynamic responses to the scourge of HIV/AIDS in emergency settings.

The Sub-working Group agreed that the dramatic impact of HIV/AIDS in emergency settings is as yet inadequately understood and acted upon by many donor and recipient governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations and the public at large. Stronger partnerships among all actors, in an agreement to integrate HIV/AIDS into their emergency and development activities, are required.

## OBJECTIVES

- To raise awareness of a broad target audience on the impact of HIV/AIDS in emergency settings, including issues of prevention and care

- To create political commitment and accountability among donor governments and the international community in addressing HIV/AIDS in emergency settings

- To achieve a significant increase in resource mobilisation in order to effectively prevent and respond to HIV/AIDS in emergency settings

## TARGET AUDIENCE

- Donor Governments
- UN and other humanitarian aid agencies
- Global NGO networks
- Media
- Civil Society

It should be noted that the strategy presented in this paper focuses on *global* advocacy only. As a consequence, the target audience includes the international community and donor governments. This will be complemented and reinforced by advocacy work at national and local levels.

## METHODOLOGY

A strong advocacy platform can only be built upon a foundation of reliable and factual information. At present, there is an increasing wealth of information and data related to the scourge of HIV/AIDS in non-emergency situations. But insufficient attention has been given so far to the impact of the pandemic in most emergency situations. Some valuable empirical data has been gathered during the recent missions of Messrs Morris and Lewis to southern Africa, and HIV/AIDS interventions have been incorporated into the mid-term review of the southern Africa Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal. Further information is available, or can be generated, from organisations operating in emergency settings (including HIV/AIDS advocacy groups).

As a first step, therefore, the Taskforce recommends to review available information on HIV/AIDS in emergency settings. This will be complemented by eliciting further information material on common dimensions of the problem and approaches and responses in affected areas.

The Taskforce may decide to begin with the southern African region, where a number of media and outreach activities have already taken place.

Facts and figures reflecting country realities, and particularly present and expected impact on livelihoods and economic development must be the basis for creating compelling key messages that convince journalists and policy makers. Data needs to be collected from emergency settings in collaboration with relevant national and regional institutions. In addition, selected country offices of the involved agencies, as well as key partner organisations (NGOs) will be asked to identify existing information and provide material in order to identify an overview of trends and priorities from which the main themes of the advocacy strategy can be drawn. See checklist of issues for consideration in Annex 1.

## MESSAGES

Key messages must be identified and must be agreed upon by all members of the advocacy strategy. In order to have an effective advocacy strategy, it is very important that all advocates give a coherent message, with mutually reinforcing strategies.

A separate session to discuss and finalise key messages should be organised in the near future.

Examples of key messages *may* include:

- Humanitarian relief operations should contribute to reducing vulnerability and increasing protection of women and children (i.e. by involving them in relief activities).

## ACTIVITIES

### A. INTERNAL INTER-AGENCY ACTIVITIES

- Development of a network of communication professionals, in headquarters and in affected areas, in each agency as focal points for advocacy activities related to the Taskforce. The focal points will establish proper coordination mechanisms as a Sub-working Group on Advocacy to assist the Taskforce, develop the key messages, in consultation with the Taskforce on HIV/AIDS in Emergencies, and discuss the next steps of the implementation of the advocacy strategy.

- Development of an inventory of available multi-media information material.

- The Sub-working Group on Advocacy will be responsible for the production of an advocacy toolkit, including key messages and guidelines for speakers.

- Dissemination of advocacy toolkit on HIV/AIDS in emergencies by the focal points to relevant officers in their respective agencies, including press officers in regional and country offices, especially those in emergency settings.

- At a later stage, the communications officer of the different participating agencies in each country/region should liaise and establish a local, national and/or regional network that will further enhance the consistent use of key messages in national and local media.

- The central press office and spokesperson of each agency will be put "on message" and ensure that, whenever appropriate, at least one of the key messages will be used in each communication to the outside public, e.g. in press releases, speeches, and other public information material.

- NGO focal points should also participate in the initiative and receive the advocacy toolkit and be briefed on the key messages and use their NGO networks to raise awareness and disseminate the messages.

### B. ACTIVITIES TARGETING EXTERNAL AUDIENCE

#### 1. Production of an Inter-Agency Information Kit
The information kit will include fact sheets, a brochure and other relevant information material. It will be published on all websites and disseminated to journalists and other target groups.  A short video may also be developed to access international media.

#### 2. Increase media coverage
Media provide an effective mechanism to influence the behaviour of decision-makers. There is a correlation between increased media coverage and levels of funding. Media raise the profile of issues with policy-makers. Without media attention, it is more and more difficult to engage the interest and influence of policy makers and the wider public.

Activities:
- Develop new angles to the HIV/AIDS "story" to ensure continued media interest. The theme of AIDS *IN* emergencies, as well as AIDS *AS AN* emergency should be developed further and consolidated with new reports, statistics and human interest stories etc.

- Identification of a number of spokespeople who can talk to the press on behalf of the IASC Taskforce.

- Organization of media tours to conflict/emergency settings to demonstrate the disastrous impact of HIV/AIDS in emergencies.

- Provide opportunities to educate key journalists in greater detail on the specifics of HIV/AIDS in emergency settings.

## 3. Enhancing web and electronic information sharing

The Internet is a valuable source of information. For the world to be aware and to better understand the issues surrounding HIV/AIDS in emergencies, the Internet is a very effective vehicle.

The use of Internet can help to increase awareness of HIV/AIDS in emergencies, stimulate and co-ordinate participation of new and existing partners, and broaden the scope of decision-making.

**Activities**

- Development of an Inter-Agency web site where each partner contributes its respective expertise, to avoid duplication of efforts. The web site will be an instrument to share knowledge and ideas on best practices and strategies.

- Establishment of email based and moderated discussion forum to cover the range of information and advocacy needs.

- A more substantive internet or email conference could also be convened around the issue of HIV/AIDS in Emergencies, which would identify key stakeholders, promote sharing of activities and provide valuable information.

- The site needs to be marketed and each partner agency will provide links from its web sites.

- To promote collective participation and responsibility, partner agencies should be able to post and suggest documents and other information.

- Establishment of a database of audio-visual content, including a photo library[1] and b-roll.

This activity will also contribute to enhanced Inter-Agency information sharing which is a prerequisite for effective global advocacy.

## 4. Involving celebrities

Celebrities, within the UN system and outside, who are involved in the fight against AIDS should be approached in order to support this Inter-Agency advocacy effort. Celebrities hold great power in putting an issue quickly on the public agenda. Causes promoted by celebrities can significantly increase awareness and raise funds globally.

Extensive time and effort will be required to identify and engage global and national celebrities. Broad research is required to find good models that can highlight the issues.

**Activities**

- Identification of candidates that are already known by someone in the Inter- Agency HIV/AIDS partnership. James Morris and Peter Piot, for example, have become famous front-runners in the fight against HIV/AIDS and should be contacted.

- Determination of the best method of approach to successfully capture celebrity attention and their desire to work on behalf of HIV/AIDS, including the establishment of an inventory of existing Goodwill Ambassadors and Messengers of Peace, who could also advocate for the HIV/AIDS in Emergency issue within their messages.

- Development of TV advertising and Public Service Announcement campaign, potentially with corporate and pro bono advertising support.

## 5. Public Awareness Campaigns

- As the Secretary-General has appointed a Special Envoy, Stephen Lewis, to draw attention to the HIV/AIDS situation in emergency settings, his position should be maximised for advocacy purposes.  Further Special Envoys might also be called upon to join campaigns and events themselves.

- Specific days and events, such as World AIDS Day, the CAP launch, World TB Day or World Refugee Day, have to be used strategically to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS in emergencies. A schedule including the most relevant UN days will be prepared to allow for early planning of activities that will be carried out during these days.

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[1] Noting, of course, that the guidelines regarding photography of children in armed conflict are respected.

- Joint Public Service Announcements will be produced and aired on major international TV channels.

## 6. Political Advocacy

Despite much progress, there is continued lack of awareness and concern among policy makers regarding the magnitude of the HIV/AIDS crisis in emergency settings and how it fuels other crises that have immense social and economic impacts. A compelling case must be made why more resources are needed to fight HIV/AIDS in emergency settings. The joint and co-ordinated Inter-Agency work plan can serve as powerful advocacy tool for incorporating the issue in major initiatives and mobilizing additional resources.

- Identification of politically targeted messages

- Development of an advocacy tool kit with, including specific advocacy techniques for policy makers

- The advocacy toolkit will be provided to the respective Resource Mobilization Units and External Relations Teams of IASC partner agencies. The messages should be incorporated in communications to key donor governments.

- Identification and development of a network of organizations, including NGOs, lobbyists etc. to conduct political advocacy on HIV/AIDS in key donor countries. Existing HIV/AIDS advocacy groups will be contacted and put on message

- Organization of briefing sessions for parliamentarians

- Organization of Inter-Agency presentations to brief donors on HIV/AIDS in emergency settings

- HIV/AIDS in Emergencies should be incorporated into the agenda of the existing meeting of agencies with the donors – e.g. Executive Boards.

- Involvement of NGO networks that are collaborating with the IASC partner agencies.

## 7. Providing advocacy training to relevant technical officials

Advocacy includes general public information and education, as well as specific political advocacy and lobbying. Technical officials may well be in a good position to know what is needed to control the spread of HIV/AIDS in emergencies to advocate for it. Yet, they may be unskilled in advocacy and may not view it as an important activity.

Activities:
- Conduct of needs assessment to identify the skills to be developed and the topics to be discussed.

- Development of advocacy material tailored for use in specific emergency settings.

- Provide advocacy training to field workers and technical officers from relevant sectors.

- Provide media training to field workers and technical officers from relevant sectors.

## 8. Communications with NGOs

NGOS are both good multipliers and a lifeline to widespread public dissemination of key messages and advocacy efforts on the behalf of the IASC Taskforce on HIV/AIDS in emergency settings.
- Special outreach efforts and toolkits for NGOs will be developed.

- Organization of joint consultations with NGOs at national level, to elaborate key messages for policy makers.

## PROPOSED BUDGET

| ACTIVITY | COST (USD) |
|---|---:|
| Consultant to review information to gather existing evidence from partner agencies of the IASC | 9 000 |
| Travel to emergency settings | 8 000 |
| Production of information material, including brochure and fact sheets | 10 000 |
| Development and maintenance of a Inter-Agency web site (budget for one year, maintenance is calculated half a day per week) | 10 000 |
| Establishment of e-mail discussion forum including moderator | 5 000 |
| Production of materials and personnel time and travel for training of health professionals and capacity building among target NGOs | 15 000 |
| Production of Public Service Announcements | XXX |
| **TOTAL** | **57 000 + PSAs** |

## NEXT STEPS

An agency will have to be appointed to direct the implementation of this strategy, and to host successive work.

A meeting will have to be convened in order to establish and agree upon key messages around which the advocacy strategy should be aligned.

## ANNEX 1: Checklist of key issues for consideration in information-gathering process

- There is clear gender discrimination to AIDS-related food insecurity, as the burden falls most heavily on women.

- Risk of HIV is high during complex emergencies when conditions such as poverty, powerlessness, food shortage, and social instability are most extreme.

- In emergencies, women and children are at high risk of violence, including rape. In many conflicts, rape is used as a method of persecution and intimidation.

- Women and girls are more vulnerable to sexual abuse and may find themselves coerced into sex to gain access to basic needs such as food, shelter, and security.

- A rise in HIV/AIDS prevalence is often associated with the disruption of existing social structures and relationships, which is often a characteristic of highly mobile populations. Increased sexual activity is often a consequence of inadequate shelter and resources.

- Food and nutrition play and important role in prevention, care and mitigation of activities in HIV/AIDS-impacted communities in emergency settings

- HIV/AIDS prevention and care must be integrated into all relevant programmatic components of humanitarian relief operations.

- HIV/AIDS affected households are often less resilient to crisis situations and are lead to adopt coping and survival strategies which increase their vulnerability further undermine their livelihoods.

- Countries should be encouraged to develop emergency preparedness plans targeting populations potentially most at risk.