



THE ALLIANCE OF MAYORS AND MUNICIPAL LEADERS ON HIV/AIDS IN AFRICA

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EDITORIAL



Mr. Jean-Barkès Gombekette, President of the Alliance of Mayors and Municipal Leaders on HIV/AIDS in Central African Republic

Introducing the “widespread solidarity strategy” dimension to further the fight against HIV/AIDS in Central African Republic

It is now been more than 20 years since the first case of AIDS was diagnosed in Central African Republic. In spite of the progress made concerning prevention and treatment, HIV is still present and continues to cause serious damage and heavy losses to the nation. The national seroprevalence rate has not stopped growing; from 2% in 1984, to 4% in 1986, and to 8% in 1988 to reach 13.84% in 2000, according to a report published by UNAIDS. At the beginning of 2001, while the general assumption was that the seroprevalence rate stabilised at 12.94 %, in accordance to UNAIDS data, the Pasteur Institute published a new seroprevalence rate of 15% in its 2002 cartography report.

In 2005, 325,000 people were living with HIV.

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CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC - MAYORS COMMIT TO CONFRONTING HIV/AIDS

Background Information

This small landlocked country, with a population of approximately 3.9 million, is the 10th most HIV-affected country on the African continent. The high HIV adult prevalence rate (13.5 % in 2003) has contributed to the decrease in life expectancy, which today is only 42 years for men and 43 years for women (WHO). In 2003 alone, 23,000 people died as a result of AIDS. Only 100 adults were receiving antiretroviral (ARV) treatment as of 2004, while 39,000 adults are in desperate need of the treatment (WHO/UNAIDS). The government of the Central African Republic, with the help of the World Bank and UNAIDS, established a National Aids Committee (CNLS) and set up a comprehensive national strategic plan against AIDS. Although the country is undergoing tense political instability, the CNLS remains operational (World Bank).

AMICAALL-Central African Republic

The launch of the Alliance chapter in Central African Republic took place in Bangui, in October 2004. During the launch ceremony, the Bangui Declaration was presented — a statement of commitment by local government authorities to become more effectively engaged in confronting HIV/AIDS in their cities and towns. Key objectives in the Declaration include: reducing

the socio-economic impact caused by HIV/AIDS, promoting a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach to HIV prevention at the local level, mobilising resources, reinforcing solidarity between cities, providing cities and towns with appropriate infrastructure, reinforcing their capacities to take action on HIV/AIDS, and guaranteeing transparency and good governance.

During the launch, an executive committee of Mayors was elected for a term of three years. Mr. Jean-Barkès Gombekette, Mayor of Bangui, was elected President. Two vice-presidents and seven members were also elected. This committee will provide guidance for the development and implementation of a local government response to HIV/AIDS in the Central African Republic.

During the 4th Annual Alliance Coordinating Committee in Dakar, Senegal, 19-22 July 2005, the Central African Republic action plan was endorsed, and its chapter of the Alliance was officially welcomed into the Alliance of Mayors and Municipal Leaders on HIV/AIDS in Africa.

An AMICAALL framework was developed for the Central African Republic in consultation with mayors and municipal leaders to guide their work. The initial focus of activities will take place in the urban districts of Bangui, Begoua, Bimb Boda, Bossembele, and Sibut.

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CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC - MAYORS COMMIT TO CONFRONTING HIV/AIDS

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Municipal HIV Teams have been set up in these districts and start up activities initiated. Seed funding for start up work is to be provided via a grant from the World Bank, managed by the regional Alliance Secretariat. Unfortunately there have been very long delays in transferring the funds, and this has had an impact on operational activities. Steps have been taken by local authorities, with support from the national AMICAALL Coordinator in Central African Republic, to identify other sources of funding support and collaboration.

There have also been a number of opportunities for the national AMICAALL Coordinator to interact with members of other national chapters of the Alliance and the UN AMICAALL Partnership Programme as part of ongoing efforts to enhance exchange of lessons

and experiences. This has included participation in the conference organised by the World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty (WACAP) in March 2006, and a workshop organised by UNAIDS in Lyon, France in May 2006.

AMICAALL Central African Republic has developed a short-term action plan aimed at reinforcing capacities at municipal level to carry out mapping of existing services, identifying gaps and priorities based on consultations with communities and service providers, developing integrated local action plans, and ensuring capacity to monitor and assess plans.

Burkina Faso

AMICAALL BURKINA FASO: START UP IN TOMA MUNICIPALITY AND EXPANDING PARTNERSHIPS



Mr. Amadou Kabore,
AMICAALL-
Burkina Faso
Coordinator

Six municipalities, Bogodogo, Boumiougou, Fada, N’Gourma, Kaya, Kombissiri, and Toma, are participating in phase one activities being supported by AMICAALL Burkina Faso. Specific actions to be taken include: establishment of Municipal HIV/AIDS Teams; preparation of municipal HIV/AIDS profiles, directories, needs and response assessments; preparation of municipal actions plans; follow up to respond to key priorities identified; and expansion of HIV/AIDS-related services.

In March, an information session was held with Toma Municipality, located 200 kilometres from Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. The National AMICAALL Coordinator met with representatives of the municipality and shared information on the setting up of a Municipal HIV/AIDS Team and the preparation of a Municipal HIV/AIDS Directory and Profile. Copies of the AMICAALL Toolkit were made available, as well as other information on the epidemic and the role and contribution of local government as part of a coordinated national response. Follow-up activities will include training and support for the preparation of needs and response assessments, local action

plans, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. In order to share information and explore collaboration, the AMICAALL Coordinator has also met with a number of organisations in Burkina Faso, including GTZ, the PACAM programme—a multi-agency initiative supporting community-based projects—UNICEF, and UNITERRA, a Canadian NGO. AMICAALL Burkina Faso has also been working with the National AIDS Programme in the country to identify ways and means of reflecting municipal-level action on AIDS in the national monitoring and evaluation framework. The AMICAALL Coordinator has been invited to attend a workshop on universal access in Mozambique in May and share observations on the role and contribution of local government.

Cameroon



Mayor of Bamendjou with participants



Bamendjou participants

AMICAALL CAMEROON: COLLABORATION WITH PRICewaterhouseCOOPERS



**Ms. Annie
Michèle Salla
Nzie,
AMICAALL-
Cameroon
Coordinator**

Under an on-going public-private partnership with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), a planning mission to Cameroon was undertaken in February 2006. Meetings were held with the AMICAALL Cameroon Programme, mayors, municipal leaders, UN, and other organisations, which are working together to enhance the local government response to HIV/AIDS. The outcome of this mission was the development of a scope of work aimed at enhancing local government management capacity to respond to HIV/AIDS, which will be

implemented with the support of a PwC team later in 2006.

AMICAALL CAMEROON: MUNICIPAL HIV TEAM ESTABLISHED IN BAMENDJOU

With the support of AMICAALL Cameroon and the Mayor, an 18-member Municipal HIV Team (MHT) has been established in the Bamendjou municipality. The MHT was launched during a two-day workshop that included the municipality's political, traditional, and religious leaders, community groups, as well as a representative from UNDP/Cameroon. The two-day workshop had 83 participants, some who travelled long distances and others who took time off from the planting season to attend.

Côte d'Ivoire

AMICAALL COTE D'IVOIRE: EXPANDING OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS



**Ms. Desirée
Djomond,
AMICAALL-Côte
d'Ivoire
Coordinator**

AMICAALL Côte d'Ivoire has extended its activities to another 15 municipalities bringing the total number of participating municipalities to 25. A working group has been set up by AMICAALL Côte d'Ivoire, with national and international development partners, which is meeting on a monthly basis to identify ways of supporting AMICAALL Côte d'Ivoire and promoting more effective

coordination among all partners. A rotating chair for this working group has been put in place, with a

different partner chairing the group every six months. AMICAALL Côte d'Ivoire is also working with the local UNAIDS and UNICEF offices to identify opportunities for working together in 10 municipalities. AMICAALL Côte d'Ivoire also is working with a national municipal training centre, which has recently been set up, and is contributing to its training sessions focusing on enhancing municipal responses to the epidemic. *The AMICAALL Toolkit* is being used to facilitate the training sessions.

Kenya

AMICAALL KENYA: EXPANDS PARTNERSHIPS AROUND MUNICIPAL WORKPLACE POLICIES/PROGRAMMES AND HOME-BASED CARE



**Ms. Margaret
Jobita,
AMICAALL-
Kenya
Coordinator**

AMICAALL Kenya made a presentation at the Annual (City) Clerks and Treasurers Forum on HIV/AIDS workplace policies. The Bondo County Council and the Kimilili Municipal Council have requested follow up support from AMICAALL Kenya to initiate municipal workplace policies/actions. AMICAALL Kenya and GROOTS Kenya, a network of grassroots women, are working together to find ways and means of collaborating around home-based care. An initial

meeting in Kakamega was well attended by all the County Councillors and Chief Officers, partners of GROOTS Kenya, Kenya National AIDS Council, and home-based caregivers.

AMICAALL KENYA: PARTICIPATES IN CONSULTATION ON UNIVERSAL ACCESS

AMICAALL Kenya participated in a national consultation on "universal access" to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, facilitated by UNAIDS, in collaboration with the National AIDS Control Council in Kenya. During the consultation, AMICAALL Kenya reiterated the commitment and contribution of local government as part of nationwide efforts to enhance capacities to scale up responses to the epidemic at the local level. Countries have been encouraged by UNAIDS to hold national consultations on scaling up towards universal access by March 2006.

AMICAALL KENYA: WORKING WITH KISUMU, THE MILLENNIUM CITY

The local government authority in Kisumu invited AMICAALL Kenya to support the municipality in its efforts to confront HIV/AIDS. AMICAALL Kenya has mobilised funding from UN Habitat (US \$50,000) and other sources to support Kisumu to enhance its HIV/AIDS response capacity. In February, the Kisumu Local Government Authority, in collaboration with AMICAALL Kenya, carried out a number of capacity building activities with City Council leaders and employees. Consultations at the ward level were also held (there are 17 wards) to assess availability of services (prevention, care and support, and impact mitigation), to discuss efforts to address stigma, fear and exclusion, and to address the growing orphan crisis, which is being exacerbated by HIV/AIDS. Out-

comes included: identification of key obstacles and opportunities to scale up action on AIDS at the local level and priority setting.

Kisumu was founded in 1901, with the coming of the Ugandan Railway. Its population has grown to over half a million people, some 60 % of who are living in poverty. Kisumu has made a commitment to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and has been declared by the UN as the first United Nations Millennium City in the world. The goals include targets for reducing poverty, hunger, and disease, including HIV/AIDS, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women by 2015.

Malawi

AMICAALL MALAWI: MOBILISES ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Ms. Delive Molema,
AMICAALL-
Malawi
Coordinator

AMICAALL Malawi has mobilised approximately US \$200,000 from the National AIDS Commission. An additional US \$30,000 has been mobilised from UN Habitat to support the work of AMICAALL Malawi. Seed funding for AMICAALL Malawi is being provided by the World Bank IDF grant.

AMICAALL Malawi has prepared

a one-year action plan aimed at enhancing local government capacity to respond to HIV/AIDS in five municipalities.

Mali

AMICAALL MALI: RECEIVES FUNDING FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF NETHERLANDS

AMICAALL Mali is now receiving funding from a five-year, US\$500,000 grant from the Government of Netherlands. With these funds, AMICAALL Mali will expand its activities to 55 municipalities, building on the experiences from actions undertaken in six municipalities. A case study on AMICAALL Mali has been prepared and will be available on the AMICAALL website (www.amicaall.org). The case study captures the experience of AMICAALL Mali during its first phase of work in six communes. With the additional funding support, AMICAALL Mali will be able to expand its support to local government authorities through targeted capacity building activities. These will include: establishing municipal HIV teams

and strengthening their capacity, developing action plans, preparing municipal profiles, AIDS service directories and case studies, and monitoring and evaluation. Through these efforts, local government authorities, working in collaboration with civil society organisations and communities, will identify ways and means of expanding much needed services, reflecting local needs and priorities and facilitate access to resources to enable scaling up of local actions on AIDS. This funding aims to help citizens access HIV/AIDS services, including prevention, education around stigmatisation and discrimination, as well as access to care and support.

South Africa

AMICAALL SOUTH AFRICA: SALGA BRIEFING

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) invited members of the Alliance/AMICAALL to address their National Executive Committee on 10 February 2006 in Pretoria. Mayor Nokuthula Mthembu from Swaziland, and Mr. Fisho Mwale, Chair of the Technical Standing Committee of the Alliance and Co-Founder of the Alliance, participated in the briefing. Mr. Mwale reviewed South Africa's participation in the Alliance, which became a member in 2000, and stressed the need for integrated action by local governments in the country.

Mr. Mwale highlighted some of the findings from a 2002 report by the South African Department of Health on issues related to AIDS and local government. Some of the recommendations from this report included the following: 1) Support the development of strong viable local structures that can fulfil a range of functions, including, but not limited to, advocacy, planning, coordination, communication, and monitoring of local HIV/AIDS responses; 2) Establish formal

mechanisms that will improve communication and coordination of local actions on HIV/AIDS for the different government structures/systems; and 3) Build capacity and competency in organisations operating at the local level to support improved planning, budgeting, management and monitoring and evaluation.

Mr. Mwale commented that, "Some of the foundations for putting into action an effective local government response to HIV/AIDS in South Africa are in place," and said, "SALGA can play an important leadership role." This meeting provided an opportunity for the Alliance/AMICAALL to update SALGA leadership on the overall achievements of the Alliance/AMICAALL (now working in 13 countries) and to explore ways and means of enhancing collaboration with SALGA and its member municipalities in order to expand current efforts to scale up municipal-based responses to the epidemic in South Africa.

Swaziland

AMICAALL SWAZILAND: RECEIVES SECOND GRANT FROM THE ACBF

On 20 March 2006, AMICAALL Swaziland signed a second grant agreement with the Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) worth US\$1 million. A signing ceremony was held in Harare, Zimbabwe, which was attended by AMICAALL National Coordinator, Mr. Rudolph Maziya, and AMICAALL Swaziland Executive Council Chairperson, Councillor Nokuthula Mthembu. The agreement was signed by Councillor Mthembu for AMICAALL Swaziland, and Dr. Soumana Sako, Executive Secretary, on behalf of ACBF. The grant was awarded to AMICAALL Swaziland after successful implementation of an initial US\$1.04 million grant from ACBF during 2001 – 2005.

Under the first grant, ACBF was pleased with AMICAALL Swaziland's activities to decentralise the national response to the AIDS epidemic through improved mechanisms and coordination capacities at the municipal level. In light of AMICAALL Swaziland's unique and important role, ACBF supported the strengthening and expansion of the programme's activities. For this second grant, AMICAALL Swaziland will work to improve effectiveness and scaling up of community-based HIV-related programmes and ser-

vices in urban areas, such as youth awareness campaigns, prevention of mother-to-child transmission, feeding schemes, home-based care and prevention, and mitigation activities, with a focus on training and knowledge sharing. ACBF anticipates that AMICAALL Swaziland activities will contribute to a reduction in HIV prevalence and lower illness and death rates among the urban population in Swaziland.



Dr. Soumana Sako, Executive Secretary of ACBF (left), signed on behalf of the Foundation while Councillor Nokuthula Mthembu, Chairperson of the AMICAALL Swaziland Executive Council (right), signed on behalf of the Alliance. (<http://www.acbf-pact.org/whatsnew/amicaall.asp>).

Uganda

AMICAALL UGANDA: HIV/AIDS URBAN WORKPLACE PROGRAMME



Mr. John Mugisa,
AMICAALL-
Uganda
Coordinator

The AMICAALL Uganda Programme has initiated an HIV/AIDS Urban Workplace Programme. The policy guideline for the programme is, “A Guide for Managing HIV/AIDS in Urban Workplaces”. It was developed with support from UNAIDS and UNDP and in collaboration with other partners in Uganda. A study commissioned by AMICAALL Uganda found that clearly defined non-discriminatory HIV/AIDS policies and programmes were lacking in urban workplaces. These workplace guidelines have been shared with key stakeholders—municipalities, Uganda Business Coal-

tion, Federation of Uganda Employers, International Labour Organisation Uganda and other development agencies.

AMICAALL Uganda is working to identify funding to pilot the HIV/AIDS workplace programmes in a few municipalities. The focus would be on building the capacity of urban authorities in these municipalities to plan and implement workplace programmes in selected urban workplaces (within municipalities and urban based businesses—including the informal sector). The plan also calls for capturing the lessons learned of the pilot activities in a best practices document, which would then be disseminated to the 80 urban authorities in the country by AMICAALL Uganda.

AMICAALL UGANDA: NEW FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

The AMICAALL Uganda Programme has spearheaded the development of a new five-year strategic plan to guide its work and that of the National Chapter of the Alliance, Uganda. The plan has been

developed via a consultative process involving mayors, local government authorities, National AIDS Council, civil society, international development agencies and other partners.

Zambia

AMICAALL ZAMBIA



Mr. Kenneth Mwansa,
AMICAALL-
Zambia
Coordinator

AMICAALL Zambia has received US\$200,000 from Irish Aid. HIV/AIDS Service Directories are being developed in 10 municipalities with support from UNDP, and computers provided by World Bank MAP. All districts in Zambia have started to prepare integrated HIV/AIDS plans that link with the national HIV/AIDS strategic plan.

AMICAALL ZAMBIA: THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Third Annual General Assembly of the Alliance of Mayors and Municipal Leaders on HIV/AIDS in Zambia was held jointly with the 50th Annual Conference of the Local Government Association of Zambia (LGAZ), in Livingstone from 15-19 May. The theme of the LGAZ Annual Conference was “Local Government Key to National Development”, and the theme of the Alliance/AMICAALL General Assembly was “From Planning to Action”. The Conference was well attended. Delegates from 57 of the 72 constituent member Councils of Zambia participated in the Conference.

The Conference was also graced with the presence of international figures including the President of the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa

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AMICAALL ZAMBIA: THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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(UCLGA), Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, and Mayor of Pretoria, South Africa, The President of the Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe, and the Executive Director of the Malawi Association of Local Government Authorities. The Alliance/AMICAALL was fully supported at the Conference with the presence of the Director of Programmes from the National AIDS Council, Dr. Alex Simwanza, the HIV/AIDS Programme Analyst from UNDP, Zambia, Ms. Delia Yerokun, and the Deputy Board Chairman from the Network of Zambian People Living with HIV, Mr. Alfred Kwenda.

The Vice President of Zambia, Hon. Lupando Mwape, MP, on behalf of the President, opened the Conference. He was accompanied by the Hon. Minister of Local Government and Housing, Mr. Andrew Mulenga, the Provincial Minister for Southern Province, Hon. Simaango, and other top government officials.

The Vice President spoke about the important role of local authorities in the achievement of the country's Millennium Development Goals. He further stated that the Government of Zambia had adopted and had commenced the implementation of the Decentralisation Policy whose aim was to devolve power, resources and responsibilities from the centre to local authorities. The President of UCLGA addressed the conference on the centrality of local government in national development. He underscored his conviction that local government was the most important arm of governance required by national governments for their plans and policies to be implemented in the villages, towns, and cities of the African continent. He further emphasised that with greater decentralisation of power and authority to local authorities with resources being spent at the local level, and with better coordination between local and national governments on develop-

ment challenges, people in Africa will begin to experience corresponding social and economic development benefits both at local and national levels.

The President of UCLGA also took the opportunity to share its corporate strategy, which has recognized AMICAALL as a strategic partner in its response to the HIV epidemic.

On the last day of the Conference, members of the councils constituted themselves into the Alliance General Assembly under the chairmanship of Councillor B.M. Muuka. The General Assembly was addressed by the National AIDS Council Director of Programmes who spoke on the National HIV and AIDS Strategic Framework for 2006 to 2010, and spelt out the role of local authorities in its implementation. The Deputy Board Chairman of the Network of Zambian people living with HIV highlighted the challenges faced by people living with HIV, and how local authorities could provide leadership to support the greater involvement of people living with HIV in civic plans and policies.

The General Assembly expressed its appreciation of the significant contribution being made by AMICAALL Zambia in redefining the role of local authorities in the national multisectoral response to HIV and AIDS and commended the National AMICAALL Office and National AMICAALL Coordinator, Mr. Kenneth Mwansa, who was operating under very challenging conditions, for galvanising local authorities in mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in their operations and in the communities they serve. The General Assembly welcomed and adopted the AMICAALL 2004-2005 Annual Report and thanked UNDP for the support it had continued to render to local authorities through the AMICAALL Programme.

Sharing Experiences and Lessons

WACAP SYMPOSIUM ON LOCALISING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty (WACAP) held its annual conference in Valencia, Spain 29-31 March 2006, with the forum's theme being "Localising the Millennium Development Goals". The Alliance and UN AMICAALL Partnership Programme were invited, along with representatives of cities and other organisations, to share information on good practices. WACAP extended an invitation to the Mayor of Lusaka, Mr. Mike Elton Mposha, who participated in a panel on municipal responses to HIV/AIDS, and shared lessons, experiences, and challenges from the Alliance/AMICAALL network. In his presentation, Mayor Mposha stated

that, "In my own country, Zambia, all of the 72 Councils have committed themselves to becoming more engaged in the response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic at the local level". He also called for intensifying and expanding action by local governments, in partnership with civil society and affected communities, "Now is the time to get involved to prevent more from becoming infected, to provide orphans with the tools to live productive lives, to provide support and care to People Living with HIV, and to secure a future for our children in order to enable them to lead healthy and happy lives."

CINDI CONFERENCE HELD IN SOUTH AFRICA

The CINDI (Children in Distress Network) Annual Conference was held 3-7 April 2006 in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Founded in 1996, CINDI is a network of over 100 NGOs, CBOs, government agencies, and individuals who collaborate in the interests of children affected or orphaned by HIV/AIDS in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands in South Africa. At the conference, a presentation was given on the Skills, Opportunities, Self-Reliance (SOS) Programme in Namibia by Ms. Lucy Hillier, the ORT IC Southern Africa Regional Coordinator. Ms. Hillier also submitted a paper on the SOS Programme in Namibia and distributed the recently produced case study, which had been developed with support from the UN AMI-

CAALL Partnership Programme.

The SOS Programme focuses on expanding access to vocational training and youth development opportunities for orphans and vulnerable young people in Namibia. It is being implemented by technical partner ORT IC in collaboration with the UN AMICAALL Partnership Programme, AMICAALL Namibia, and other local partners. The SOS Programme is being undertaken with funding from the OPEC Fund for International Development and the United States President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

COMMONWEALTH REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM HELD IN UGANDA

This Commonwealth Regional Symposium, with the theme "Strengthening Local Democracy and Good Governance—Realising the Millennium Development Goals", was held in Kampala, Uganda 26-28 April 2006. The symposium was organised by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum and the Commonwealth Secretariat, with support from the Government of Uganda (Ministry of Local Government), and the Uganda Local Government Association. The event was also held in close collaboration with United Cities and Local Government of Africa (UCLGA).

Matheus K. Shikongo, Mayor of Windhoek, Namibia, made a presentation on local government responses to HIV/AIDS, sharing experiences from Na-

mibia, and from the work of the Alliance/AMICAALL network. Namibia, with an estimated HIV prevalence rate of 21%, is one of the most affected countries in the world. Mayor Shikongo outlined some of the actions that have been undertaken since the AMICAALL Namibia Programme was initiated in 2001. These include: increasing access of local authorities to relevant and up-to-date information and other tools which support advocacy, sensitisation, programmes and service development; expanding community-based services, for example the Multi-Purpose Centre in Otjiwarongo; and expanding opportunities for orphans and vulnerable youth to access vocational training and other services.

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COMMONWEALTH REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM HELD IN UGANDA

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In reference to actions in his own city, Mayor Shikongo said, "In Windhoek, we have adopted Internal and External HIV/AIDS Programmes, and committed ourselves to practical initiatives in response to the devastating effects of this pandemic." He also said they are working in partnership with many entities: local NGOs, such as the National Namibian Association of AIDS Service Organisations, National Planning Commission, Ministries of Health, Education and Youth, USAID, and PricewaterhouseCoopers. The Mayor closed his presentation by urging more action, "Now is the time for more and more mayors to get involved and take action. The clock is ticking. We are

losing people every day. We must secure a future for our children that enable them to live healthier and happier lives."

A study visit was also organised to see practical examples of how local government is helping to deliver the Millennium Development Goals. In Kampala, the focus of the study visit was on HIV/AIDS. The AMICAALL National Coordinator in Uganda, Dr. John Mugisa, contributed to the symposium and made available materials and other information on the work of AMICAALL.

WORLD AIDS ORPHANS' DAY COMMEMORATED ON MAY 7TH

Thousands of people, including mayors from 207 cities in 32 countries, commemorated World AIDS Orphans' Day on 7 May 2006. World AIDS Orphans' Day is an initiative (started in 2002) of François-Xavier Bagnoud (FXB) International, an NGO based in Geneva, that supports the world's orphans and vulnerable children affected by the AIDS epidemic. A coalition of leading African, American, and Indian NGOs planned many different activities for World AIDS Orphans' Day which included: child-led forums, organising "circles of friends" across Africa and the US, rallies, drama presentations, lobbying

with mayors and government officials, town hall meetings, hosting a gala with international dignitaries in major cities, developing interactive websites and media tools, and conducting radio and television campaigns. The global theme for World AIDS Orphans' Day 2006 was to urge governments to fulfil the commitments made at the UN in 2001 to fund programmes to deal with the world's AIDS crisis. Their actions will be reviewed at a UN special session taking place in May/June 2006.

For more information on World AIDS Orphans' Day, please visit: www.worldaidsorphansday.org.

UCLG PARTICIPATES IN UNGASS MEETING 31 MAY – 2 JUNE 2006

The second United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS) took place 31 May – 2 June 2006 in New York City. United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) circulated a position paper on Local Government and HIV/AIDS at UNGASS.

The Mayor of Lusaka, Mike E. Mposha, participated in a UNGASS roundtable and addressed the issue of the local government response to HIV/AIDS. He noted that HIV is hindering the collective ability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Mayor Mposha also highlighted the work of the Alliance and AMICAALL Programmes and urged politi-

cal leaders to work with local government authorities and ensure that national plans and strategies are developed with the inputs of those "who need to make them a reality in cities, towns, and villages". He stressed mayors and municipal leaders are already taking action but that more support is needed, and that the "involvement of the world's mayors and municipal leaders is critical to every aspect of this global challenge: as local leaders, as service providers, as facilitators of change, and as the level of government close to the citizens we serve".

New Documentation

Skills, Opportunities and Self-Reliance (SOS) Namibia — A Case Study

The UN AMICAALL Partnership Programme, collaborating with technical partner ORT IC, and Namibian organisations involved in this initiative, facilitated the preparation of a case study examining development, start-up, and the first 18 months of implementation of the SOS Programme in Namibia. Entitled, *Responding to Needs of Orphaned and Vulnerable Young People: The Skills, Opportunities and Self-Reliance (SOS) Programme in Namibia — A Case Study*, it includes sections on the background and rationale of the programme, accomplishments to date, and challenges and lessons learned. The case study is available at: www.amicaall.org.

AMICAALL Central African Republic Newsletter

The AMICAALL Central Africa Republic Programme launched a newsletter. The first issue came out for March-April 2006. It can be accessed (in French) at: www.amicaall.org.

AMICAALL Mali Case Study

A case study on the AMICAALL Mali Programme is being prepared with assistance from the UN AMICAALL Partnership Programme. The case study should be finalised in June 2006 and available through the AMICAALL website: www.amicaall.org.

AMICAALL Swaziland Video

A video on AMICAALL Swaziland that documents activities and achievements with respect to municipal action on AIDS is under development. The video should be completed by May 2006. For more information, please contact Mr. Rudolph Maziya, National AMICAALL Coordinator, at: rudolph.maziya@amicaall.co.sz.

Endnotes

Endnotes: WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women

This study analyses data from 10 countries. Approximately 24,000 women were interviewed in order to provide data on the forms and patterns of domestic violence across different countries and cultures.

Violence against women by an intimate partner contributes to ill health of the women, and contributes to women's vulner-

ability to HIV infection. The research supports that HIV prevention programmes should include activities to prevent sexual violence and intimate partner violence.

For further information and to access a copy of this study, please visit:

http://www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study/en/index.html.

EDITORIAL

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Twenty-nine thousand deaths were due to AIDS. Forty-thousand people living with HIV/AIDS wait eagerly to benefit from ARV treatment, but only 5,000 are receiving care. The number of orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV/AIDS reached 274,000 — out of a total population of 3,895,000 inhabitants.

In the presence of the catastrophic repercussions of HIV and the growing rate of infection at national level, we, Mayors and Municipal Leaders in Central African Republic, stress the necessity of a **“widespread solidarity strategy”** to respond more efficiently to the challenges of HIV/AIDS.

This renewal of our efforts constitutes a new, decisive phase in the fight against this century's great threat. This phase defines a new philosophy and establishes an ambitious coordinated approach at the national level — where the goal is to achieve a reversal of the epidemic as soon as possible. It sets out to give even stronger responses to the underlying social and health issues that contribute to new infections, and which have a devastating effect on those infected, as well as those who have been closely affected by the epidemic.

This **“widespread solidarity strategy”** is one of the most decisive challenges to enable significant scaling up of the response to HIV/AIDS. This challenge is crucial because in spite of numerous initiatives developed at all levels, HIV is still present, stronger than ever.

The Alliance of Mayors and Municipal Leaders is taking action on the **“widespread solidarity strategy”** through specific commitments, mid-term goals and short-term concrete objectives linked to prevention and treatment of HIV, as well as action concerning the management of the socio-economic impact of the epidemic.

Irrespective of the continent, there is not a moment that passes that an individual is infected or dies of AIDS. The situation is much more worrying in sub-Saharan Africa. In a country such as

Central African Republic, the central government is overwhelmed by the epidemic's evolution despite numerous efforts to take up the challenge. Much remains to be done at the central government level to effectively implement national plans and strategies — which at the beginning had not sufficiently focused on local communities.

It is important to keep in mind that local communities and municipalities have an important role to play to address the challenges caused by the HIV epidemic. Notably the local governments have to confront on a daily basis the overburdened social and health services within their municipality; the care of the poor, orphans, vulnerable youth — all increasing due to the impact of HIV and the lack of financial resources to respond to the numerous needs.

To this effect, the local governments are the first institutions closest to the population to politically commit in taking actions or to develop and implement efficient responses to HIV/AIDS through partnerships. Through their involvement, the local governments should convince the central government and the partners to mobilise necessary resources in order to reinforce management capacities and set up programmes and services related to HIV/AIDS.

The intensification of the actions to fight HIV/AIDS will depend on the political involvement of local government, which will constitute a catalysing factor in our municipalities and communities for a responsible change of citizens' behaviour in regards to HIV/AIDS.

NOTEBOOK: UPCOMING EVENTS — JUNE-SEPTEMBER 2006**1ST ANNUAL AFRICAN HIV/AIDS CLINICAL UPDATE AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE: NAIROBI, KENYA, 15-16 JUNE 2006**

This two-day conference will provide an international exchange of information and ideas about the latest clinical developments in the field of HIV/AIDS and women's and children's issues, as well as discussion of leadership strategies. (<http://www.thebody.com/cdc/newconfs/june.html>).

2ND AFRICA CONFERENCE FOR SEXUAL HEALTH AND RIGHTS: NAIROBI, KENYA, 19-21 JUNE 2006

The main theme of the conference is "Sexuality, Economics, and Development in Africa". The goal of the conference is to bring the discourse of sexuality, sexual health, and sexual rights to the forefront in Africa. Specifically, the conference aims to give participants an opportunity to meet and discuss issues of sexuality, sexual health and rights, share experiences and innovative programmes, build alliances and networks, and disseminate research findings on current and emerging sexuality issues in Africa (<http://www.thebody.com/cdc/newconfs/june.html>).

WORLD URBAN FORUM: VANCOUVER, CANADA, 19-23 JUNE 2006

The World Urban Forum is an initiative of the United Nations' Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT). Held every two years, the World Urban Forum invites governments, local authorities, non-governmental organisations and other experts on urban issues from around the world to discuss the challenges of urbanisation.

Members of the AMICAALL network from Kenya and Malawi will be participating in a workshop at the World Urban Forum, which will focus on managing the HIV/AIDS epidemic at the local level. Country and regional experiences will be shared. (http://www.wd.gc.ca/ced/wuf/default_e.asp).

CIVICUS WORLD ASSEMBLY 2006: "ACTING TOGETHER FOR A JUST WORLD": GLASGOW, UK, 24 JUNE 2006

The CIVICUS World Assembly, with the theme, "Acting Together for a Just World," is taking place in Glasgow, Scotland from 21 – 25 June 2006. This is a forum for international civil society representatives to come together to exchange ideas, experiences, and to build strategies for a just world. CIVICUS is an international Alliance of civil society organisations, estab-

lished in 1993, that supports citizen action and participation.

The UN AMICAALL Partnership Programme (UN APP) has facilitated participation of the AMICAALL network in a CIVICUS workshop entitled, "HIV/AIDS: From Global Goals to Local Action—New Initiatives for Thinking and Acting Together." The other hosting organisations for this workshop are: the Bangladesh Manobadhikar Sangbadik Forum, the Campaign for Improved Access to Treatment for AIDS in Resource Poor Countries, HIV Scotland, and the Treatment Action Campaign, South Africa—all of which are involved in enhancing community-led responses to HIV/AIDS. This interactive workshop will focus on leadership and what enables and facilitates people and institutions, public and private, to think and act together.

XVI INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE TORONTO, CANADA, 13-18 AUGUST 2006

The Conference theme —*Time to Deliver*— underscores the continued urgency in bringing effective HIV prevention and treatment strategies to communities around the world 25 years after AIDS was first identified. AIDS 2006 will bring together the movement of people responding to the HIV/AIDS epidemic to share their lessons, and together stake out the road ahead. An important new conference feature is a focus on five key challenges in the response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, or on scaling up, and lessons from the field. These key challenges will be addressed throughout the programme, across a number of sessions and activities, encouraging delegates to use the conference as an opportunity to identify roadblocks and solutions, and develop a shared agenda for action.

UN APP has been invited by UNAIDS and UNDP to contribute to an AIDS 2006 workshop on monitoring and evaluation, with a focus on local level. The experience of Alliance/AMICAALL network will be shared during this workshop. (<http://www.thebody.com/cdc/newconfs/august.html>).

AIDS VACCINE 2006 CONFERENCE: AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS, 29 AUGUST – 1 SEPTEMBER 2006

This meeting will gather scientists from all fields with a special interest in the development of vaccines against HIV/AIDS in order to exchange ideas and allow for the formulation of innovative concepts and a global strategy to reach the objective of finding a successful HIV vaccine. (<http://www.thebody.com/cdc/newconfs/august.html>).

NOTEBOOK: UPCOMING EVENTS — JUNE-SEPTEMBER 2006**AFRICITIES: NAIROBI, KENYA, 18-24 SEPTEMBER 2006**

The theme of the 4th International AFRICITIES Summit will focus on building local partnerships for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals by African local governments. This conference, organised by the Municipal Development Partnership (MDP), brings together central and local governments, NGOs, the private sector, research and training institutions, international organisations, and development agencies. The AFRICITIES Summit is viewed as a platform of politi-

cal dialogue on decentralisation in Africa.

The Alliance will hold a Coordinating Committee meeting and its General Assembly during AFRICITIES. The Alliance/AMICAALL network will also be organising a special session on local government and its response to HIV/AIDS in Africa. Africities has also invited UNAIDS to organize a thematic session on HIV during the summit.

(<http://topics.developmentgateway.org/urban/rc/ItemDetail.do~1055760?itemId=1055760>).

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