

.Calendar.

**XXXVIIIth Meeting of the
Advisory Council on AIDS
(ACA)**

2:30pm 14 December 2001

**VIIIth Meeting of the AIDS
Prevention and Care
Committee (APCC)**

6pm 24 January 2002

**XXIVth Meeting of the
Scientific Committee on AIDS
(SCA)**

2:30pm 17 January 2002

**VIIIth Meeting of the
Committee on Promoting
Acceptance of People Living
with HIV/AIDS (CPA)**

(Date and time to be announced)

Highlights of this issue:

- * Lessons from Melbourne on page 49
- * Meeting notes covering the last meeting of CPA on page 50
- * Council news on page 51
- * UNAIDS Press Release about ILO joining UNAIDS on page 52

Lessons from Melbourne

THE 6th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific was held in Melbourne between 5 and 10 October 2001. Two members from the Advisory Council on AIDS participated in the event. They're Professor YL Lau (chairman of the Scientific Committee on AIDS) and Dr Richard Tan. With the number and subject matters of AIDS conferences ramifying rapidly in the last decade, is there still a purpose for "general" regional meetings?

Before one draws any conclusion about the needs for big conferences, let's focus on what we have learned from Melbourne. Unlike a South African meeting, the forum in Australia, where the HIV rate is relatively low, serves to alert us of the considerable efforts the country had put in to reduce HIV transmission, particularly in drug users. The success of the harm reduction programme in Australia can be equated with the 100% condom campaign in Australia. One reverberating theme that has been reflected by almost all participants returning from the Melbourne Conference is that: Have we done what we should be doing on harm reduction in Hong Kong? At a time when our Mainland authorities are contemplating needle exchange for HIV control, are we sure that we have an effective programme to prevent outbreaks from occurring in drug users here locally?

Unfortunately harm reduction is still a "foreign" concept for our partners in drug rehabilitation programmes. There have been more debates on ethics rather than concerns from public health perspectives. The challenge for the AIDS programme is to introduce harm reduction as one important public health strategy in Hong Kong. ⚡

Congratulation

ON 13 October 2001, Mr Graham Smith of AIDS Concern was awarded the Chief Executive's Commendation for Community Service at a ceremony held at the Government House.

Mr Smith is a member of the Council's AIDS Prevention and Care Committee, and co-chair of the Community Planning Committee, which operates under the auspices of the Hong Kong Coalition of AIDS Service Organisations. The Council and the Secretariat wish to congratulate him for the well-deserved honour. ⚡



A syringe deposition box in Melbourne



meeting rescheduled

DUE to unforeseen circumstances, the 38th meeting of the Advisory Council on AIDS is now rescheduled for 14 December 2001. The Secretariat apologises for any inconvenience which might have been caused by this change of meeting date. ⌘

Identification of discrimination

AT the 6th meeting of the *Committee on Promoting Acceptance of People living with HIV/AIDS* (CPA), Mr MAK Hoi Wah presented some preliminary results of a study on the phenomenon of discriminations in Hong Kong, using the *Protocol for the Identification of Discrimination against Patients living with HIV* formulated by the UNAIDS (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS).

Thirty-seven situations were proposed in the *Protocol* to guide the assessment. Mr Mak's group set out to examine three sources of information - laws, regulations and known practices of discrimination. It was concluded that except for insurance practice, overt discrimination has not been found in other thirty-six situations. Members cautioned that the results should be interpreted in perspective. The presence of anti-discrimination regulations may not necessarily mean that discrimination is not practised. Mr MAK's group is working on a final report, and has started a new round of in-depth study to examine the practice of discriminations.

Mr MAK is a members of the CPA. He is affiliated with the City University of Hong Kong. ⌘

An HIV Infected CSW

ON 19 July 2001 and the following days, newspapers in Hong Kong carried a prominent headline describing how an HIV infected commercial sex worker (CSW) was arrested and then sentenced to six months' imprisonment for breach of condition of stay.

What interested people most was that the CSW's name was included in the story, and that the magistrate made comments on the CSW's behaviour, remarking how that was seen as being equivalent to a case of murder.

The story was discussed at a meeting of the *Committee on Promoting Acceptance of People living with HIV/AIDS* (CPA) on 24 October. Two main issues were raised and debated. Firstly, members were concerned if confidentiality had been protected by the police and other officials handling the situation. Secondly, it was not clear if the magistrate had or had not based his ruling on the lady's HIV status. If so, had there been prejudice since "murder" and "breach and condition of stay" were very different in their nature.

Understandably, there were a lot of gaps in the story written in the newspapers. It would therefore not be possible to draw a meaningful conclusion retrospectively. Nevertheless, the Committee concluded that we should be learning from the incident so that future occurrence of similar events could be properly handled. Knowingly HIV/AIDS is a new and complex issue. It would be useful if opportunities can be identified to improve the understanding of the legal profession in general about the subject. Members were also advised to reflect their views promptly in the form of, say, letters to editors, so as to attract the attention of those involved in the incident. The Committee heard that the *Society for AIDS Care* had written to the Correctional Services Department and the Equal Opportunities Commission to reflect their views.

CPA now meets every three to four months. Discussion on cases that may touch upon discrimination is a regular agenda item of the Committee. ⌘

Learning from the Conference

MR Tony Pang thanked members of the Committee on Promoting Acceptance of People living with HIV/AIDS (CPA) for their active participation in the Hong Kong AIDS Conference. At the CPA meeting on 24 October, he brought to members' attention the following two documents - a report by Dr Tim France and the Conference's proceedings. Interested members should contact Mr Pang as limited copies are still available. ⌘

First China AIDS Conference

THE first national conference on STD/AIDS Prevention and Control would be held between 13 and 16 November in Beijing. Interested member may wish to contact the Conference Secretariat at 8610 63034521 (fax) for further information. Deadline for application has already been passed. ⌘



World AIDS Day 2001

THE WHO Regional Office for Western Pacific (WPRO) has recently prepared and released materials for World AIDS Day 2001 with the theme "I care, do you". The materials include the following:

- * The Regional Director's speech
- * Materials for the press
- * Materials for activities during World AIDS Day

The publications can be seen on the WHO/WPRO website:

http://www.wpro.who.int/themes_focuses/theme1/focus4/pub_doc.asp ⌘

Red Ribbon Fellows

TWO Lions-Red Ribbon Fellows came to Hong Kong in October. They were Dr CHEN Zhong-dan 陳仲丹 of Wuhan Antiepidemic Station and Dr ZHU Min 朱敏 of Yunnan's School-based Health Education Programme Office. Both of them were greeted by Dr Homer Tso, our Chairman during their stay in Hong Kong.

The two experts each gave a presentation at a seminar at the Red Ribbon Centre on 23 October. Dr CHEN described his team's efforts in launching a 100% condom project in sex establishment, modelled on the experience in Thailand. They are now at the end of the planning phase. The involvement of stakeholders, including those from sex establishment, and officials from government agencies is crucial. Despite the relatively low rate of HIV in Wuhan, the potential for its spread is substantial.

Dr ZHU introduced the audience to the implementation of school-based health education programme in Yunnan. The objective is to integrate HIV, sexual health and drug addiction knowledge in schools. The support of bilateral and multilateral donors has been secured.

The Lion-Red Ribbon Fellowship Programme is a joint effort of Red Ribbon Centre and Lions Clubs International District 303 - Hong Kong and Macau. Under this scheme, mainland professionals are sponsored to come to Hong Kong for two weeks' attachment. Activities include visits, workshops and research projects. Members of the Council are invited to seminars conducted by Lions - Red Ribbon Fellows, which is now a regular feature of the programme. ⌘

Reported HIV/AIDS Statistics updated 30 June 2001

<i>Gender</i>		HIV		AIDS	
		total / last quarter	total / last quarter	total / last quarter	total / last quarter
<i>Gender</i>	male	1347	41	460	11
	female	289	9	64	4
<i>Ethnicity</i>	Chinese	1131	36	404	11
	non-Chinese	505	14	120	4
<i>Transmission</i>	heterosexual	931	31	340	12
	homosexual	315	11	94	2
	bisexual	79	0	27	0
	injecting drug use	40	1	9	0
	blood/bl products	68	0	19	0
	perinatal	13	0	6	1
	undetermined	190	7	29	0
TOTAL		1636	50	524	15

NOTE:

The "total" refers to the cumulative total number reported since 1984, under the voluntary HIV/AIDS Reporting System. "Last quarter" refers to the period April to June 2001. The "AIDS" number is a subset of the "HIV numbers" and the two should not be added.

SOURCE:

Special Preventive Programmes, Department of Health, Hong Kong SAR Government

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION *formally joins* UNAIDS

[Geneva, 25 October 2001] THE Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) today announced that the International Labour Organization (ILO) has formalized its commitment to fighting the global HIV/AIDS epidemic by becoming a Cosponsor of UNAIDS.

The ILO joins the seven existing UNAIDS Cosponsors, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNDCP, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. UNAIDS brings together the efforts and resources of its Cosponsoring organizations to help countries prevent the spread of HIV, provide care and support for people infected or affected by the disease, reduce the vulnerability of individuals and communities to HIV/AIDS, and ease the socioeconomic and human impact of the epidemic.

“The ILO brings to UNAIDS its understanding and expertise in the world of work. We know the workplace is a key location for HIV/AIDS prevention and care programmes,” said Dr Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS. “ILO’s Cosponsorship will considerably strengthen UNAIDS.”

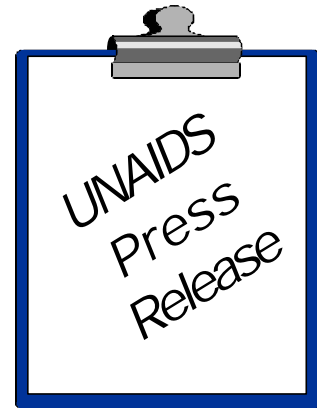
ILO Director-General Juan Somavia said, “HIV/AIDS affects everyone today but has an especially profound impact on workers and their families, enterprises and employers, and national economies. With the accession of the ILO to UNAIDS, we now add the historic force of tripartism - governments, workers

and employers - to the international efforts being undertaken to meet the challenge of HIV/AIDS and its impact on the world of work.”

The ILO has already made a major contribution to the global campaign against HIV/AIDS with the adoption of a pioneering Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work. The Code was launched during the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, in New York, 25-27 June.

The new Code is a product of intensive efforts by HIV/AIDS experts representing the ILO’s tripartite partners - workers, employers and governments. It provides guidelines for developing concrete responses to HIV/AIDS at enterprise, community and national levels in the following key areas: prevention of HIV/AIDS, management and mitigation of the impact of HIV/AIDS on the world of work, care and support of workers infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and elimination of stigma and discrimination on the basis of real or perceived HIV status.

Since the establishment of the ILO Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work (November 2000), the ILO has carried out country-level activities in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean to support the efforts of governments and their social partners at national, sectorial and enterprise levels to combat the



epidemic. In this regard, the ILO Code of Practice provides a basis for developing national codes of practice and workplace policies and programmes at the enterprise level. As a Cosponsor of UNAIDS the ILO will be able to expand its activities jointly with other UNAIDS partners to fight the epidemic. ⌘

For more information, please contact Anne Winter, UNAIDS, Geneva, (+41 22) 791 4577, Dominique de Santis, UNAIDS, Geneva, (+41 22) 791 4509, Andrew Shih, UNAIDS, New York, (+1 212) 584 5030. You may also visit the UNAIDS Home Page on the Internet for more information about the programme (<http://www.unaids.org>).

