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62nd ACA meeting

The 62nd ACA meeting was held on 11 April 2008. There were three major items on the agenda. A summary of the discussion at the meeting is shown below.

(I) A Review of HIV and AIDS Situation in Hong Kong 2007

Members noted that there were **414** HIV reports and **79** AIDS reports in 2007. Cumulatively, DH received **3,612** HIV reports and **934** AIDS cases as of 2007. The number of HIV report increased by 11% as compared with the year 2006. Male accounted for 83% in cases reported in 2007. **168** men with homosexual or bisexual contact were newly reported to be HIV infected in 2007. It increased by 42% when compared to the figure last year. The rise was persistent and rapid since 2004.

Injecting drug use (IDU) was the third commonest HIV route of transmission in 2007. About one tenth of cases reported infections through IDU. There were **43** IDU reports in 2007.

A slight increase in absolute number of AIDS cases was noted in recent five years but the proportion of new AIDS cases relative to HIV reports remained stable (17% in 2007). Sixty-two were Chinese (78%). Sixty-eight of them were males (86%).

The UNAIDS workbook (2007 version) had been used to estimate the number of people living with HIV in Hong Kong. Based on the

projected mid-year population for 2007 and various seroprevalence surveys conducted by the Department of Health, it was estimated that there were about 3,600 people living with HIV in Hong Kong in 2007, with a probable range between 2,300 and 4,200.

(II) A Joint Assessment of HIV/AIDS Prevention, Treatment and Care in China (2007)

Members noted the report with the title “A joint assessment of the prevention, treatment and care in Mainland China 2007” published by the State Council AIDS Working Committee Office (SCAWCO) and the UN Theme Group on AIDS (UNTG) in China. The present report was an updated based on the joint assessment report published in 2004 and in 2005. There had been changes in the HIV epidemic and progress on AIDS responses in the last 2-3 years.

It was noted that knowledge of the HIV situation had been enhanced through strengthening and expansion of surveillance sites and activities. Over 220,000 HIV infections were reported cumulatively, with 80% from the six provinces of Yunnan, Henan, Guangxi, Xinjiang, Guangdong and Sichuan. Injecting drug use (IDU) accounted for about 40% of the total, while 25% came from blood collection and transfusion and 20% from heterosexual transmission. Among reported cases in 2007, nearly 40% were heterosexual, 3% homosexual, 30% IDU and 10% blood collection and transfusion cases.....

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The Tenth CFA Meeting

A summary of the tenth CFA meeting held on 1 April 2008 is as follows:

(1) Presentation of AIDS Concern's Visit to HIV prevention programme in MSM in New South Wales, Australia

Members learned of AIDS Concerns' study trip to Sydney, New South Wales of Australia from 3 to 8 December 2007, the main objectives of which were to gain an insight into MSM HIV prevention, support to PHAs and GIPA, sexual health, AIDS policy and strategy in Sydney. They were aware that the HIV infection rate in Sydney had reached a plateau after the Sydney Authority had adopted the measures mentioned in the presentation. One of the concerns raised by members was that PHAs in Hong Kong did not come out to fight for their interests similar to their counterparts in Sydney because of the cultural difference. Members agreed that a concerted effort by the Government and NGOs would be needed to improve the AIDS situation in Hong Kong.

(2) Presentation of the AIDS Trust Fund Guiding Principles for Funding Applications to Medical and Support Services and Publicity and Public Education Applications

Members were aware that ATF had proposed a set of new guiding principles in relation to MSS and PPE programme applications to address the changing epidemic and community needs in response to the latest recommendations made by ACA. The proposed guiding principles would include (i) general requirements of programmes, (ii) targeted high risk groups; and (iii) priority areas for action. It was noted that Project applications would not be limited by the new guiding principles so as to allow for flexibility for research activities, pilot studies or innovative activities outside the requirements. Members generally welcomed the new funding mechanism.

However, a few members were disappointed that women and youth were left out of the targeted high risk groups.

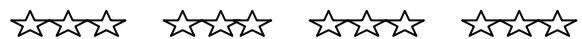
(3) Annual HIV and AIDS Statistics 2007

Members noted that there were 414 HIV and 79 AIDS reports in 2007. Cumulatively, DH received 3612 HIV reports and 934 AIDS cases as of 2007. The number of HIV report increased by 11% as compared with year 2006. Members were concerned about the surge of HIV infections in recent years in particular the soaring high records of HIV infections of MSM. In response to a member's suggestion, information about the use of soft drug would be collected in the forthcoming behavioural surveys conducted by DH.

(4) Family Planning Association's Hong Kong Youth Sexuality Study 2006

Members noted the results of the Youth Sexuality Study which was conducted every five years since 1981 and reflected the changes in local youths in matters concerning their knowledge, attitude and behaviour toward sex. It was noted that the findings were still relatively conservative when compared to most western developed countries. Nevertheless, they indicated that the trend towards increased openness in sexual attitude and activity was continuing without a clear improvement in sexual knowledge among young people.

The next CFA meeting will be held on 24 June 2008.



Congratulations to Prof LAM Tai-hing on receiving the Sir Robert Kotewall Professorship in Public Health on the Third Inauguration of Endowed Professorships on 14 April 2008 at the University of Hong Kong

Professor LAM Tai-Hing, who studied for his MBBS degree at the University of Hong Kong's Faculty of Medicine, has worked at the Department of Community Medicine since graduating in 1975. Now Chair and Head of Department since 2000, he is a well-known public health educator, researcher and advocate specialising in tobacco and other lifestyle related diseases.

Professor Lam's main research areas include family, occupational and environmental health, adolescent health, chronic non-communicable diseases and infectious diseases with a major focus on tobacco and other lifestyle related diseases. In particular, he has been investigating smoking prevalence in children and second-hand or passive smoking.

He is a well-known media personality as part of the department's efforts to raise more public awareness by publicising its major findings on the problems of smoking and other public health issues. As an expert in this field he also contributes to tobacco control internationally through his consultancy for the World Health Organisation. He has organised new smoking cessation research, training and services, including counselling and nicotine replacement therapy in Hong Kong and China Mainland.

As a public health scientist and advocate, Professor Lam made substantial contributions to the Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance (Amendments) resulting in the banning of smoking in restaurants and many public places that came into effect on January 1, 2007. He is Vice-Chairman of Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health. In 1998, for promoting the concept of tobacco-free societies, the WHO



awarded Professor Lam a Commemorative Certificate and Medal for his achievements. In 2000, he was awarded the China Tobacco Control Award.

Professor Lam is heading a new project on family health and well being, with funding of about \$100 million from the Hong Kong Jockey Club for the first 3 years. This will be a unique research platform with a cohort of 20,000 households in Hong Kong. He has published more than 300 papers in international peer reviewed journals. He is a member of the Hong Kong Advisory Council on AIDS and he chairs an Expert Working Group on Cancer Screening and Prevention under the Cancer Co-ordinating Committee. He was President of the Hong Kong College of Community Medicine from 1997 to 2001. He has been Justice of Peace since 2005.

For detailed information about the event, please visit the website at www.hku.hk/ephku



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Members were aware of the seven challenges and recommendations outlined in the report.

(III) Five-year Plan on MSM and HIV in Mainland China (2007-2010)

Members noted the action plan for reducing and preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS in MSM on the Mainland.

The next ACA meeting will be held on 4 July 2008

**Dr Bernhard Schwartländer
UNAIDS Country Coordinator**

Dr Bernhard Schwartländer presented the keynote speech on “Bringing the HIV/AIDS Response to Where Infections Happen – Working with and Learning from the Communities” at the AIDS Seminar 2008 held on 19 April 2008 at the Public Health Laboratory Centre. His speech covered the following areas:

- Why is civil society needed
- Partnership in Advocacy
- Partnership in program implementation
- Partnership in policy development
- New models in program oversight

He concluded his speech with the following remarks:

- An effective response to HIV is un-thinkable without strong involvement of civil society;
- Civil society has been an engine for innovation and learning;
- Involvement in policy development still limited;
- Civil society needs to be strengthened (management capacity) to be able to fully participate in a sustainable response



Prof CHEN Char-nie, receiving a souvenir from Dr Thomas TSANG, Controller, Centre for Health Protection at the Seminar

Dr Bernhard Schwartländer is currently the United Nations Country Coordinator on AIDS in Beijing, China. Dr Schwartländer joined UNAIDS China from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria where he served as the Director for Performance Evaluation and Policy. Prior to the Global Fund he held a number of senior international positions including as the Director of the World Health Organization’s HIV Department, and as the Director of Evaluation and Strategic Information with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

Dr Schwartländer is a medical doctor and holds a doctorate in medical epidemiology. He received his education and professional training in Germany and the US at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For detailed information about Dr Schwartländer, please visit the website at <http://unaids.un.org.cn/UNAIDS%20IN%20ENGLISH/About%20UNAIDS3.htm>



Dr Schwartlander (second from the left) attending the Seminar