



Media Advisory WHO/8

URGENT FOCUS ON NUTRITIONAL NEEDS OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

**WHO Consultation, 10 - 13 April 2005
Durban, South Africa**

Durban/Geneva -- HIV infection and malnutrition rates are rising to alarming levels in sub-Saharan Africa. There are complex interactions between nutrition and HIV/AIDS; lack of nutrition weakens the immune systems of people living with HIV/AIDS, increasing their susceptibility to other infections and worsening weight loss. Those who are ill from HIV, from poor nutrition or both are less able to find food or work to sustain themselves.

Many African governments are urgently scaling up life-saving anti-retroviral treatment in line with global "3 by 5" targets, but in doing so, are facing a range of policy and programme challenges related to food, nutrition and HIV/AIDS. They need clear recommendations for the evidence-based strategies and interventions that the 25 million Africans living with HIV/AIDS need for themselves, their families and their communities today.

To address these issues, the World Health Organization is convening:

A Consultation on Nutrition and HIV/AIDS in Africa

The goal of the consultation is to:

- Develop strategies that are both evidence-based and feasible to help improve the health status of people living with HIV/AIDS in southern and eastern African countries.
- Review and disseminate the latest evidence on nutrition and HIV/AIDS, and thereby help ensure nutrition is integrated as part of a comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS.

WHAT: Consultation on Nutrition and HIV/AIDS in Africa

WHEN: 10 to 13 April, 2005

WHERE: International Convention Center, Durban, South Africa

WHO: Participants are from 20 countries from Eastern and Southern Africa, regional HIV/AIDS and nutrition networks, civil society and NGOs involved in HIV/AIDS and nutrition related activities throughout the region. The honourable Minister of Health for South Africa, Dr Manto Tshabalala Msimang will open the conference on Sunday 10th April at 18h00.

HOW: Duly accredited media representatives will be welcome to attend the opening ceremony event on Sunday evening 10th April, and attend general plenary sessions.

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For media accreditation details see www.sahims.net. This site will also carry media releases, keynote addresses, and procedures for arranging interviews with spokespersons.

Briefing notes

This consultation is being held as a direct response to Resolution 57.14 of the World Health Assembly, 22 May 2004 on "*Scaling up treatment and care within a coordinated and comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS*". This resolution urges Member States as a matter of priority to pursue policies and practices that promote integration of nutrition into a comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS (article 2(3)(h)).

The meeting is a collaborative effort of six UN agencies – WHO, UNICEF, FAO, WFP, UNHCR and UNAIDS - the United States National Institute of Health/ Department of Health and Human Services (NIH/DHHS) and the South African Department of Health. WHO departments of Nutrition for Health and Development and HIV/AIDS are planning and coordinating the event.

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