

Position paper on HIV and AIDS treatment and care

AIDS remains the most ominous non-curable disease mankind has experienced in recent decades. The enormity of this worldwide burden requires highest **political commitment and coherent strategy** of any public health system and of the International community.

aidsfocus.ch, the Swiss platform on HIV/AIDS and international cooperation, declares its adherence to the following position, and it supports appeals and campaigns that are in line with this position:

Health care in general, AIDS care included, is a human right that is not and should be respected in many settings, be they of a social, political or economics domain. In view of limited services and resources special attention is needed to comply with criteria such as vulnerability, equity in access, quality care, cultural and gender sensitivity, discrimination and stigma. Moreover, the right to access free or at least affordable ARV treatments should be guaranteed to all, regardless of age, gender, nationality or income.

It is imperative **to provide ART as part of a continuum of care**: a comprehensive approach that includes prevention measures, voluntary counseling and testing, prevention of mother-to-child transmission, management of OIs (opportunistic infections) as well as social and psycho-social support services. Knowledge and information on the disease, readiness of the affected individual (and its family environment) to counseling and testing, availability of trained staff and sustained supply of quality drugs are prerequisites for achieving a sustained success in terms of HIV and AIDS treatment and care. Once again, it is important to underline the feasibility and the need of giving ART in developing countries, with success results equal to those obtained in developed countries.

Treatment and care are demanding goals in terms of **medical-clinical quality** and availability of **trained people** (doctors, nurses, pharmacists, lab technicians, pharmacists, social workers, but also lay people and people living with HIV) and **financial resources**. The delivery platform for national ART programs is the frequently overburdened and under-resourced public health system. The involvement of all key stakeholders, such as community members, political and/or social leaders, healthcare workers and people living with HIV/AIDS but also international donors and national governments therefore is of utmost importance to achieve successful national HIV/AIDS treatment and care programs.

Medical science is challenged to continuously **research** and **share** updated recommendations to the authorities concerned on several HIV-related topics ranging from vaccines, diagnostic tools, treatment regimes to effective service delivery. In this respect, Switzerland has an important role to play, as host country to many multinational pharmaceutical companies. Swiss authorities can and also should play a central role, both in the domain of research and development as well as the promotion of easy and affordable access to effective ARV treatment and care.

aidsfocus.ch, Swiss platform on HIV/AIDS and international cooperation, November 2006

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