SUDAN PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY HIV/AIDS SECRETARIAT

HIV/AIDS BULLETIN

SPLA HIV/AIDS Bulletin

November/December 2007 Edition

World AIDS Day: December 1, 2007

This year the World AIDS Day will focus on leadership, the theme set by the World AIDS Day Campaign under the five-year slogan "Stop AIDS, Keep the Promise".

World AIDS Day is a day when people from around the world come together within a single effort to raise awareness about HIV and to express global solidarity with people living with HIV. World AIDS day is not just about raising awareness. It also provides a global opportunity to urge governments and leaders for all promises on AIDS to be kept as well as an opportunity to demonstrate commitment and action on AIDS. *To learn more visit* www.unaids.org

A statement from the Director of Uniformed Services Dr. Edward Lado

by Captain David Marle

Dr Edward stated that the Southern Sudan AIDS Commission's (SSAC) theme is "Take the lead, fight HIV/AIDS in South Sudan."

In preparation for the World AIDS Day (WAD), SSAC has put together two working groups; the WAD task force and specific sub committees (uniformed forces, VCT, resource mobilization, BCC) to support in the planning and implementation of WAD activities. SSAC has also organized workshops for various target groups such as secondary school students, secondary school teachers, religious leaders and the South Sudan Legislative Assembly. The Speaker from the Uganda Parliament has been invited to address the South Sudan Legislative Assembly workshop. These workshops started Saturday 10/11/2007 and will run every Saturday until WAD.

Dr. Edward further informed us that the official launching of World AIDS day will be on 16/11/2007. The chairperson of SSAC will release a press statement to mark the launch.

On December 1, the day will start with the march for life parade. The SPLA HIV/AIDS Secretariat with financial support from IntraHealth/CDC will mobilize 1000 uniformed forces (SPLA, JIU, police, wildlife, fire brigade and UNMIS) for this march. The WAD ceremony will be held at the Juba Football Stadium and will officiated by the first vice president, president of GOSS, and Commander in Chief for SPLA.

SPLA recognizes HIV/AIDS as a command problem.

By Lt. Col John Woja

"As said by our late leader Dr. John Garang that HIV/AIDS is enemy number one after signing the CPA. We in the SPLA stand for this statement and will be in the frontline commanding soldiers against HIV/AIDS." Major General James Hoth, deputy chief of Staff for Logistics.

The SPLA draft HIV/AIDS policy which was developed and adopted in January 2006.
The SPLA policy recognizes HIV/AIDS as a command problem and calls on commanders to lead the fight against this new enemy (HIV/AIDS). Command commitment and direct participation of commanders are central to winning the war against this enemy as has been demonstrated by other countries' militaries like Uganda where their input have been crucial in reducing prevalence rates. Commanders can however only lead the struggle if they are well sensitized and equipped with the necessary information on HIV/AIDS.

The SPLA HIV/AIDS Secretariat utilizes one day commander sensitization works to sensitize and educate the commanders.The objective of the commander sensitization

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workshops is to increase the SPLA commanders' knowledge about HIV/AIDS and its potential impact on their personnel and institution. The workshops also sensitise the commanders on how to adopt active roles in HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support. The commander sensitization workshops are designed to cover two broad themes: Identifying HIV/AIDS as an enemy and Confronting the enemy. Since its reception in June 2006, the SPLA HIV/AIDS Secretariat has sensitized 1,394 senior, mid and junior commanders.

SPLA HIV/AIDS Secretariat launches HIV/AIDS activities in the 3rd Division

By Carol Karutu

The Secretariat has been in existence since June 2006. Its activities have however been predominantly limited to the 2nd Division area of responsibility. With support from IntraHealth/CDC the Secretariat launched its activities in the SPLA's 3rd Division headquartered in Tonj. The 3rd division area of responsibility covers much of the greater Bahr el Gazal region. The activities below were conducted as part of the launch.

Commander sensitization workshops, August 21-24, 2007.

The Secretariat began the launch by introducing the program to the top division leadership. The senior Division commanders consulted included Major General Machiek Akucpiir, Brigadiers John Mayar Majiik, Ajak Yek Alex, Ajak Michael Ngor, William Manyang Mayar, Daniel Deng Dau and Lt. Col Nicholas Madit and Captain (Dr) Marial among others.

Two, one day, senior commander sensitization workshops were then conducted in Tonj for 60 commanders holding key command and administrative functions in the 3rd division.

HIV/AIDS outreaches, August 21-24, 2007

Three HIV/AIDS outreaches to the troops were conducted as part of the broader objective of launching the HIV/AIDS program. These reached an estimated 6,000 troops.

Meeting with top division leadership, August 24, 2007

On completing the launching activities, the Secretariat participated in a meeting with senior

(Meeting, cont.) commanders from the Division. The meeting was chaired by the acting Division Commander, Brigadier. John Mayal Majiik. The leadership expressed gratitude to the efforts of the SPLA leadership, the Secretariat, and partners in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The 3rd Division leadership also expressed continued commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS. The leadership requested the following from the Secretariat: establishment of HIV counseling and testing centers for the troops, more training for officers in HIV/AIDS, HIV/AIDS films, need to expand the program to the spouses of the soldiers, condom education and more condoms.

Training of the HIV/AIDS Educators and Focal Persons in the 3rd Division

Twenty (20) military personnel from the 3rd Division participated in the initial 3 week training and graduated as HIV/AIDS educators/focal persons. This training which took place October 22-November 9, 2007, was facilitated by the UPDF trainers. The training and graduation of the SPLA HIV/AIDS educators/focal persons marked the beginning of the implementation of HIV/AIDS outreaches, commander sensitization, condom education and distribution for the SPLA troops in the 3rd Division.

Training of the peer educators in the 3rd Division

With the support from PSI, the Secretariat also trained and graduated 30 peer educators in a 5 day workshop. The peer educators training was facilitated by the SPLA HIV/AIDS educators/focal persons in training, guided by the UPDF trainers. The peer educators will take the HIV/AIDS messages closer to the troops.

Future plans for the 3rd Division.

Establish counseling and testing services for the troops and their families, sensitize mid and junior level commanders, conduct HIV/AIDS outreaches for the troops, provide condom education and distribute condoms. Establish referral networks to existing treatment centers.

In the next issue of the HIV/AIDS Bulletin:

- Gender and HIV/AIDS