

# Integrating programming to address gender-based violence and engage men and boys to advance gender equality through national HIV strategies and plans

14-16 November 2011  
Istanbul, Turkey



National Strategic Plans on HIV and AIDS are a key platform for articulating an HIV response that advances gender equality, champions women's rights, engages men and boys, and ends gender-based violence as a cause and consequence of HIV. Country teams from 16 countries, across five regions, came together in Istanbul, Turkey, from 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> November, 2011, to review their current National Strategic Plans, assess the strengths and weaknesses of these plans with regard to addressing gender-based violence and engaging men and boys. The meeting was convened by members of the UN Interagency Working Group on Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV,<sup>1</sup> (specifically: UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and WHO), in collaboration with the [MenEngage Alliance](#), [Sonke Gender Justice](#), and the [ATHENA Network](#).

Meeting delegates (53 in total) were drawn from government – in particular Ministries of Health and/or Women/Gender, and National AIDS Councils (NACs) – civil society, and national UN offices. Sixteen countries from five regions were represented at the meeting, namely:

**Sub-Saharan Africa:** Nigeria, Uganda, Malawi, Swaziland;

**Asia-Pacific:** Indonesia, China, Myanmar, Thailand;

**Middle East and North Africa:** Egypt;<sup>2</sup>

**Latin America and the Caribbean:** Brazil, Belize, Ecuador;<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Includes UNAIDS Secretariat, Cosponsors (UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, ILO, WFP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNODC, WHO, WORLD BANK) and UN Women.

<sup>2</sup> Only one person was able to attend from Egypt. A delegation from Djibouti was unable to attend at the last minute due to the length of time required to obtain visas.

<sup>3</sup> A delegation from Guatemala was also unable to attend due to challenges regarding routing and obtaining visas.

**Eastern Europe and Central Asia:** Russia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Moldova.

In addition, two delegates from a similar meeting in 2010 attended, in order to share lessons learnt and progress on country action plans from that meeting; Mr Dragan Ilic from the National AIDS Council in Serbia, and Dr Lillian Otiso from the Liverpool VCT Foundation in Kenya.

The first day of the meeting focused on the question: **Why integrate gender-based violence and engagement of men and boys as partners for gender equality into National Strategic Plans (NSPs)?** Presenters and delegates explored the interconnections between HIV and gender based violence (both cause and effect) and the role of men and boys in both perpetrating and preventing gender-based violence, especially violence against women and girls. Country delegations then used a policy analysis tool to review their current or draft National Strategic Plans and identify gaps and priority issues to address.

The second day of the meeting focused on the question: **How to integrate gender-based violence and engagement of men and boys as partners for gender equality into National Strategic Plans (NSPs)?** Participants were introduced to the Gender Road-map as a key recourse for ensuring that NSPs effectively integrate gender. Presentations were given by resource persons from bodies working on gender-based violence, including violence against sex workers (The European Network for HIV/STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers – TAMPEP, UN Women: UN Trust Fund for Eliminating Violence Against Women, WHO; entities working with men and boys as partners for gender equality (Promundo, Sonke, COWLHA); and organisations working to promote the meaningful involvement of women living with HIV (UN Women, Salamander Trust). Seven women from among the participants of the meeting co-facilitated this session. The delegates then worked in country groups to develop country action plans for integrating attention to gender-based violence and working with men and boys as partners for gender equality into their NSPs.

On the third (half) day of the meeting country action plans were finalised and shared, and the delegates explored both what they would need by way of resources and support in order to implement the plans, and what resources and support they could offer, by way of experience, tools, skills, and materials. The meeting ended with an evaluation and a group photograph.

### **Highlights and Outcomes**

Participants at the meeting expressed their satisfaction with the outcomes. Delegate evaluations indicated a high level of perceived usefulness at both the conceptual stages of the workshop, and the strategic planning stage. Participants were fully engaged throughout the three days. Multi-sectoral delegations, with delegates from government, National AIDS Councils, and Civil Society, created a dynamic environment for learning and exchange among and across the country delegations. Sessions with focused regional group-work also allowed for effective

learning and lively exchange at the regional / international level. *“I know from the Asia Pacific region that there was a lot of cross-learning and exchanges between participants from Myanmar and China and between Thailand and Indonesia for example. For starters, they intend to keep in touch and to share their experiences on implementing their country action plans.”* (Coordinator Feedback)

Each country used the tools provided to carry out a policy analysis of their relevant NSP and produced an action plan for immediate implementation. Delegate feedback indicated that the process of systematically analysing the NSPs was new and in some instances challenging, but that it also resulted in a greater level of engagement with NSPs. *“The development of the Policy Analysis Tool prior to the meeting made a big difference to guiding several of the sessions and was invaluable in assisting participants to identify and think through specific, tangible interventions that could be included in their NSPs.”* (Coordinator Feedback) Delegates discussed having the tool translated for broader in-country use, particularly in the context of the NSP process. Together with the Gender Roadmap and the Country Action Plan Template, this provided a full complement of content and process-based planning tools.

Country Action Plans were detailed and grounded in the reality of what is actually happening in each of the countries. In three instances (Belize, Thailand, and Swaziland), new NSPs were in the process of being drafted and the country teams were able to craft the exact language they wanted to see inserted into the new Plans. *“It has been very valuable. For our group – Thailand – it was a good composition. Important point is that the persons responsible for both HIV/RH NSP have been here. The other members are from NGOs – strong advocates. Very effective. Perfect.”* (Participant Feedback)

**Additional highlights and key strengths of the workshop were identified as follows:<sup>4</sup>**

1. The meeting was organized to facilitate peer-to-peer learning and this was highlighted as one of the key strengths of the workshop. The involvement of ‘Returnee Delegates’ from Serbia and Kenya who had participated in the Nairobi consultation and were able to share their country’s experience in the follow-up to that consultation, which gave great credibility to the consultation.

Peer-to-peer learning also took place through presentations of good practice and practical examples of programmes and strategies, with examples from COWLHA (Malawi), Sonke Gender Justice and through a [film extract](#) from Stepping Stones (Uganda).

2. Intra- and cross-regional group work was also felt to be very useful, and an illustration of why global workshops that bring different countries and regions together have added value. *“Two Chinese and Russian participants were comparing various cultural factors that would shape interventions working with men in*

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<sup>4</sup> Analysis drawn from delegates’ evaluations and coordinators’ feedback

*addressing GBV even on the way to the airport in the minivan!”* (Coordinator Feedback)

3. Integration of sex work and HIV issues: The involvement of the TAMPEP Association (a non-profit organization that aims to promote actions and policies that respect the rights of immigrants and immigrant sex workers) to give a sex worker rights programming perspective and technical support was highlighted by a number of participants and issues pertaining to sex worker rights were taken up in the Country Action Plan from Ecuador. *“We are still very much in our knowledge base driven by a sub-Saharan Africa perspective and need good models of what is working for key vulnerable groups, particularly in concentrated epidemic settings.”* (Coordinator Feedback)

4. The session on the meaningful involvement of women living with HIV; the women living with HIV who co-facilitated the session provided regional insights and technical support to country delegations, and in particular shed light on the gendered dynamics of participation. Several delegations responded to these messages with positive inputs into their country action plans. The process enabled the translation of the consultation into an opportunity to also support the leadership of women living with HIV, community building, and networking.

5. The development of a shared resources ‘pool’ in addition to a virtual archive and resource centre comprising all the presentations given at the workshop as well as many additional background documents, advocacy and policy tools, which is accessible to meeting participants through the below URL. The contents (to date) of the virtual resources centre were also shared with participants through the distribution of CD-roms .

[http://www.salamandertrust.net/index.php/Projects/GBV\\_Workshop\\_Istanbul\\_Nov\\_2011/](http://www.salamandertrust.net/index.php/Projects/GBV_Workshop_Istanbul_Nov_2011/)

The workshop was anchored in a participatory approach. As such, meeting participants were involved in reviews, strategy sessions, and closing remarks. This promoted peer-to-peer exchange and learning, provided motivating examples of success, and grounded the discussions in reality. In the evaluations, delegates consistently highlighted the usefulness and need for more peer exchange, discussion and learning, at national, regional and international level.

### **Why this Meeting**

The UN Interagency Working Group on Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV,<sup>5</sup> continues to work in partnership with the MenEngage Alliance, Sonke Gender Justice, and the ATHENA Network to organize multi-stakeholder consultations to address gender-based violence and engage men and boys for gender equality in the context of HIV. This second consultation builds on the first consultation, *“Nairobi Meeting on Integrating Strategies to Prevent Gender-based Violence and Engage Men and Boys*

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<sup>5</sup> Includes UNAIDS Secretariat, Cosponsors (UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, ILO, WFP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNODC, WHO, WORLD BANK) and UN Women.

*to Achieve Gender Equality through National Strategic Plans on HIV and AIDS,”* which was held in December 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya. The Nairobi meeting was organized to respond to the commitments outlined in the UNAIDS Agenda for Accelerated Action for Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV and the UNAIDS Strategy “Getting to Zero.” It focused on facilitating more successful integration of gender-based violence and the engagement of men and boys for gender equality into countries’ National Strategic Plans on HIV and AIDS and other relevant national policies. The Nairobi and Istanbul meetings form part of growing efforts to address the intersections of gender equality and HIV, including: championing women’s rights in the context of HIV and AIDS, addressing the HIV needs of women and girls, enhancing efforts to integrate a focus on gender-based violence as a cause and consequence of HIV into HIV responses, and actively engaging men and boys in achieving gender equality to challenge constructions of masculinities that exacerbate the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS.