



Briefing Document

International Consultative Workshop

An emergency public health response to the combined DR-TB and HIV/AIDS crisis in the southern African Region

Dates: 28th, 29th and 30th October 2009

Venue: Esibayeni Lodge, Manzini Region, Swaziland

From October 28th to 30th, 2009, the Ministry of Health of the Kingdom of Swaziland and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) will bring together international and local experts in a consultative workshop. They will discuss the public health response to the combined drugresistant tuberculosis (DR-TB) and HIV/AIDS crisis in the southern African Region, with the aim of finding practical solutions for countries in the region with a high prevalence of HIV and TB.

The Swaziland Ministry of Health and Médecins Sans Frontières teams working in the country have faced numerous challenges in the implementation of a decentralised model of care, suitable to rural settings affected by high drug resistant (DR) TB and HIV prevalence. These difficulties call for more innovative solutions, that will benefit the majority of TB and HIV patients in need of treatment, adapted to the Swaziland reality; highest HIV prevalence and TB notification rate in the world, limited number of medical doctors, inconsistent HIV and DR TB drug supply, poor (DR) TB diagnostics, etc.

Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders, an international, independent, medical humanitarian organisation, has been working in the Shiselweni region, south of Swaziland, since November 2007. While the main aim of this workshop is to give the experts privacy to discuss all these issues freely, media practitioners are invited to the workshop's official opening ceremony, to be graced by the Honorable Benedict Xaba, Minister of Health, and other dignitaries, on the 28th October 2009.

There will also be an opportunity for media personnel to have interviews with key expert delegates, MSF Head of Mission, among others, on the same day; as well as attend a field trip to MSF's project area in Shiselweni to see the conditions most HIV and TB patients live under on 27th October 2009.

For interview requests and further details, please contact the following:

Phillipe Latour
Communications Officer – Geneva
Médecins Sans Frontières-Switzerland
Tel office: +268 404 8307/ 3405
Fax office: +268 404 7884
Cell: +268 611 4956

Lungile Dlamini
IEC/ Communications Officer - Swaziland
Médecins Sans Frontières-Switzerland
Tel office: +268 404 8307/ 3405
Fax office: +268 404 7884
Cell: +268 605 6439

Addendum.

Workshop discussion topics:

- Health Systems - What is currently the most appropriate public health model for addressing the regional crisis due to the combined DR-TB / HIV-AIDS epidemics?
- Clinical Management of DR TB – What are recommended standards for clinical management of DR-TB, keeping a balance between the urgency of mass treatment and the need to quality of care?
- Infection Control - What are the minimal TB infection control standards to be put in place in the health facilities and in the communities?
- Health Information Systems – What are the best solutions to strengthen Health Information Systems in resource limited settings and the best strategies to integrate data from different sources?
- Laboratory – What minimal laboratory resources at what level and what type should be put in place in high TB and HIV prevalence resource limited settings to deal with the epidemics?
- Ethical Issues - What are the main Ethical dilemmas in the management of DR-TB patients in Southern Africa?
- Drug Supply - How can uninterrupted supply of quality drugs be ensured at all levels of health care system?

Participants:

- International experts on Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS
- WHO Representatives and WHO Country Technical Officers
- Ministry of Health representatives and programme managers: both national and regional
- MSF staff from headquarters and related programmes/projects
- Representatives of other NGOs present in the region
- Patients' groups, network representatives of people living with HIV/AIDS, Peer groups