



SOUTH WEST WOMEN CONFERENCE ON AIDS

Nov. 28 – 1st Dec. 2006
Limbe, Cameroon



Theme

“LISTEN AND TAKE ACTION”

Overview

The South West Women conference on AIDS is a landmark event that will bring together stakeholders of different levels across the Province and Cameroon as a whole. This will be a unique opportunity for everyone involved in combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic -- researchers, healthcare workers, civil society, government, UN organizations, activists, donors, industry, the media, and people living with HIV/AIDS to share and exchange ideas on how to better fight the pandemic in Cameroon.

The conference in its greater part will showcase issues surrounding women in the context of HIV/AIDS in Cameroon in general and the SW Province in particular. The conference seeks to put women at the center of the national response with the understanding that women and girls bear the greatest brunt of the impact of the pandemic. We understand that women are the most infected and affected by the pandemic and equally have the ability to slow down its spread and control its impact if they are given a chance. While much of the conference will focus on issues around women, many other issues affecting the fights against AIDS in General will also be highlighted.

The conference will provide an opportunity for other NGOs as well as individuals responding to the pandemic to showcase their activities, share ideas, learn from each other and reinforce networking and improve on skills for a better local and national response.

It will also give an opportunity for the local and national decision makers to share and understand the problems and challenges faced by rural women in particular and all women in general as far as the fight against HIV/AIDS is concern. It is our greatest dream to institute this conference as a yearly event to make important inputs and evaluations of organizational, local and national programs and to eventually slow down the spread of the Virus and reduce its social, economic and political impact on the nation.

Project justification

Findings of the Cameroon Demographic and Health Survey (which included for the first time a population based seropositive test of a randomly selected population) released last in 2005 showed a national prevalence rate of 5.5 % with big variations by provinces (1.7% for the lowest and 8.7% for the highest). The national prevalence amongst women is 6.8% and amongst men 4.1%.

The south west province has the second highest prevalence rate of HIV in the country. This province is equally second in the prevalence among women and girls (11.0%). At the beginning of 2005, Action AID International -Cameroon office sponsored the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Foundation (LUKMEF-Cameroon) to carry out an intensive and extensive research to find and document the factors fueling the spread of the pandemic among women in the South West Province of Cameroon. The project code

name “ MUTAPOLA ” constituted the first ever documented fact book of the root causes of the spread of the HIV among women in the province.

Gender inequalities were identified as some of the major driving forces behind the high AIDS prevalence among women and girls. These Gender-based inequalities overlap with other social, cultural, economic and political inequalities—and affect women and girls of all ages in the province.

The research report that was validated by a cross section of over 78 women including a female member of parliament, the PTG has constituted a framework in which strategies to reverse the spread of the pandemic among women in the South West province can be implemented.

The study reaffirms a framework that should put women and the girls at the center of the response. It is right-based in its orientation and affirms the inalienable rights of women as well as their under-affirmed capacities.

The framework has four main pillars. The first two look at the main objectives this project is trying to achieve, the next two address the enabling factors:

- 1) *The right to comprehensive care and treatment*
- 2) *The right to secure livelihood which includes the rights to food, income, assets and education;*
- 3) *The need to mobilise women, strengthen their organizations (or organizations working on their behalf) and strengthen voice;*
- 4) *Ensuring that the policy and practice environment is one that enablers women to claim and exercise their rights*



Poverty levels coupled with high family responsibility on the women were discovered to push most of these women to prostitution and extra-marital affairs to help meet up with these demands. Cultural barriers and beliefs also fuel the spread of AIDS among women. Even more disturbing is the low level of awareness as concerns prevention, treatment and care as far as AIDS is concern in the rural areas of the province. Poor road networks greatly hampers the effort of these rural poor

to reach the city markets with their farm products that is the sole source of income and livelihood. In many areas of this province, the local radio and Television signals do not reach. Hence most AIDS messages do not reach this population. The different attributes and roles that societies assign to males and females profoundly affect their ability to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS and cope with its impact. The high economic dependence of women on men, the unchecked cultural barriers, the noninvolvement of women especially those in the rural areas in decision making has since kept the women in an observer position on issues that actually affects them directly. Lack of knowledge, capacity and the means to learn, understand and advocate for her rights in the context of HIV/AIDS will continue to fuel the spread of AIDS among women unless something is done and done urgently. Networks of

women Associations as well as network of persons living with the virus are rare to find in the province and where they exist, very low organizational capacity greatly reduces their ability to make any meaningful impact on national AIDS policies. Reversing the spread of HIV among women in the province therefore demands that women's rights are realized and that women are empowered in all spheres of life. Over the years many NGOs and Associations have been created to fight AIDS including the Local Aids Control committees that were put in place in almost every community by the government of Cameroon. Poor communication, poor checks and balances, lack of active networks and meaningful advocacy networks in the province and the country as a whole has resulted to huge failure of many programs over the years. In most cases AIDS monies never reach the real targets. Such practices have gone unnoticed or unpunished because even the should be beneficiaries do not even know that such programs targeting them ever existed. Information and good practice sharing among organizations is poor or non-existence. This national dilemma is even stronger in the South West province where organizations working on the field do not know each other hence making a coordinated fight against the pandemic difficult. The South West women conference on AIDS will therefore provide a unique opportunity to bring the women , women associations, NGOs, the Government, the international organizations responding to the pandemic in Cameroon and South West Province in Particular, The traditional rulers, Companies and other stakeholders to meet and examine strategies, share information and knowledge, discuss and evaluate programs carried out in the province and thereof provide important input to the provincial and national strategy that will greatly reduce the prevalence of the pandemic in the province as a whole and among women in particular. This will be the first of such a broad base forum organized in the province targeting women in the context of HIV/AIDS since 1986.

Conference Budget:

The following budget heads are key to the success of the conference:

1. Hiring of Conference halls
2. Transportation of delegates
3. Lodging
4. Feeding
5. per diems
6. Logistics (T-shirts, bag, etc)
7. Publications (conference posters, booklets, report, other handouts)

Funding strategies:

To finance for this conference LUKMEF and its partners are now seeking financial assistance from National and international organizations and Foundations, The National AIDS control committee, Companies and individuals.

We request organizations to directly assist a number of delegates to this conference. It has been carefully calculated that it will cost a maximum of **100,000Fr CFA (US \$182.00)** to fully sponsor a participant to this conference. This sum will cover Transport to and from Limbe, Lodging + breakfast, conference materials, per diem for launch and Dinner, Taxi fair, shuttle buses within the town. For more information, please kindly send a mail to info@mutapolacameroon.org

CONFERENCE STRUCTURE

The conference will take the form of a multi-point sessions with several conferences going on at specific times in five major halls and locations in the City of Limbe. The organizing committees are however at work trying to program conferences in a way that will give room for maximum participation by delegates. Some conference sessions are manned completely by other local NGOs and agencies. All these are fully covered in the conference program booklet that will be handed to all delegates.

Conference information Desk: This task force is in charge of all information, issue of delegate badges and coordinates information between the organizers, sponsors and delegates.

Conference venue(s)

The conference venue is Limbe in the Fako Division of the south West province of Cameroon. The conference shall use a total of Ten conference rooms and a community villages located at the Limbe community field just a few meters from the main conference center.

Cultural Input:

The cultural aspect will involve traditional dances, tradition meals, cultural displays, shopping centers, restaurants, bars, Musical shows etc. (NB we welcome enervative ideas from readers and partners)

Accommodation

The over 26 hotels in Limbe shall give very comfortable accommodation to all the delegates. However, a lot of other centers including schools are also offering their dormitories to delegates that may not be chance to get rooms in the hotels. Individuals and relatives are also offering accommodation. We are still encouraging delegates who may not be able to gain scholarships to the conference to seek financial support from other sources

Transportation:

Shuttle buses will be available to transport delegates from one conference centre to another. However, delegates are advised to make sure that they come along with some money to handle some basic running cost should they miss shuttles or are coming home late

Security

The security is pretty good in Limbe. Like any other developed cities, we advice delegates to be very careful when they move around. You must not accept offers or proposals to lodge if you are not so sure about the person in front of you. In case of difficulties, place call the conference security. A full list of contact numbers will be made available before the conference at www.lukmefcameroon.org or www.mutapolacameroon.org

Hosting a Satellite Meeting

Intended for Conference delegates, satellite meetings will be fully organized and coordinated by the party hosting the satellite (private company, government agency, institution or NGO). Conference organizers make satellite slots available for a fee, which is based on the room capacity and the time slot, and will

allocate slots based on the theme of the day. The organizers are however hard at work trying to raise funds to cover as much of the cost as possible to allow many local NGOs, Women Associations that have something to showcase but not the means to make their voices heard to host some of these meetings at low cost.

Exhibitions

The South West Women Conference on AIDS 2006 will offer unparalleled opportunities to both commercial and non-commercial organizations to showcase their products and services to the largest gathering of HIV/AIDS professionals in the country

With a well allocated exhibition space and more than 3,000 delegates expected, organizations cannot afford to miss this chance to reach so many key players in the national response to HIV/AIDS

The role of volunteers

Volunteers will help plan the Conference, coordinate Local Host programme activities, greet visiting delegates, assist with registration, act as guides during the Conference, staff the cultural Village activities, and perform other crucial tasks. Volunteers will receive training and support from the Local Host Secretariat volunteer coordinators.

How to Volunteer

The success of the conference depends heavily on the support of approximately 100 volunteers working with LUKMEF and the Local Host. A registration form will be available from mid-March 2006 for you to register as a volunteer for the Conference.

Abstracts

Accepted abstracts will appear in its full form in the Abstract Book, on the Abstract CD-ROM and on the Conference and www.Mutapolacmeroon.org and www.lukmefcameroon.org websites. In addition, all delegates will receive a Final Programme, which will contain the Conference Programme and a list of all oral and poster abstract presentations.

Abstract Selection

All abstracts submitted to the Conference will go through a blind, peer-review process carried out by a national review panel. Each abstract will be reviewed by no fewer than three reviewers, and the final selection of abstracts will be done by member of the abstract committee in the July of 2006. Successful abstracts will be accepted as oral or poster presentations, or for poster exhibition.

- **Categories**
 - **Track A: Biology and Pathogenesis of HIV**
- Basic Retrovirology
 - Immunology and Pathogenesis
- Effects of Viral Replication on Immune System Function and Structure
- AIDS Vaccines
- Microbicides

- Drug Development

Track B: Clinical Research, Treatment and Care

- The role of the woman as a care giver
- Caring for the care giver
- Course of Infection and Disease
- Understanding the drugs you take (Treatment Literacy)
- Diagnosis and Monitoring Tools
- HIV-associated Diseases
- Antiretroviral Therapies
- Vaccines and Immune-based Therapies
- Traditional medicine and HIV/AIDS
- Provision of Care and Therapy
- Traditional diets and HIV/AIDS

Track C: Epidemiology, Prevention and Prevention Research

- Epidemiology of HIV/AIDS
- HIV/AIDS Surveillance
- Behavioural Research/Interventions to Prevent HIV
- Prevention Programmes
- The role of the Church in AIDS Prevention
- Cultural implications in National AIDS Response
- The impact of audio/visual coverage on HIV prevention

Track D: Social, Behavioural and Economic Science

- Gender, Age, Class, Race and Ethnicity Vulnerability and Risks
- Sexual and Cultural Vulnerability and Risks
- Alcoholism and Substance Use
- Poverty and sexuality
- HIV/AIDS and food security
- HIV/AIDS impact on basic Education
- Living With HIV: Culture, Contexts and Challenges
- Feeding habits and HIV/AIDS
- Information Access and impact on HIV/AIDS
- Economic and Related Issues
- Adult literacy and AIDS
- Access to AIDS fund in rural areas
- Religion and AIDS
- Social, Behavioural, and Economic Methods and Theories
- Media and HIV/AIDS in Cameroon

Track E: Policy Scope and Objectives

- HIV/AIDS Policy Development and Decision-making Processes in Cameroon
- HIV/AIDS Policy: Implementation and Programme Impact
- Traditional values and AIDS
- HIV/AIDS Policy Analysis and Evaluation
- HIV/AIDS and Workplace policy
- Women's Right in the context of HIV/AIDS
- Human Rights, Law and Ethics
- Interactions between other Policy Areas and HIV/AIDS
- Actors' Roles and Responsibilities
- Commitment, Transparency and Accountability
- HIV/AIDS budget Tracking and advocacy

REGISTRATION FEES

all delegates are required to register for the conference. Registration fee **DO NOT** include lodging, feeding or Transportation. Only delegates on scholarship will benefit from lodging, feeding, transportation, per diems etc

	Standard fee	Late surcharge (after 30 April 2006)	Last minute surcharge (after 20 th September 2006)
Regular delegate			
Non-LRC	CFA 20,000	+5000 surcharge(25,000)	+ 8000 surcharge(30,000)
LRC -Members	CFA 10,000	+5000 surcharge(15,000)	+ 8000 surcharge(18,000)
Organizations	CFA50,000	+5000 surcharge(55,000)	+ 10000 surcharge(60,000)
Student/Youth/Post-doc			
Non-LRC-members	CFA 5,000	surcharge(5,000)	surcharge(5,000)
LRC -Members	CFA 3,000	surcharge(3,000)	surcharge(3,000)
Accompanying Person			
Non-LRC	1000	No surcharge(1000)	No surcharge (1000)

(LRC is LUKMEF Resource Center)

This fee may change without notice. However, no change will be effected once you have paid your Registration fee.

What does my Fee Cover?

Delegates	Bag	T-shirt	Conference Program	Abstract book	Local shuttles	Lodging
Non-LRC	01	01	01	01	Access	Non
LRC -Members	01	01	01	01	Acess	non
Students	01	01	01	01	Access	non
Accompanying	0	0	0	0	Access	non
Organisations	03	03	03	03	Access	non

What if I get a Scholarship?

If you get a scholarship, you will benefit the following:

Delegates	Bag	T-shirt	Conference Program	Abstract book	Local shuttles	Lodging	Per diem	Transport
Non-LRC	01	01	01	01	Access	Yes	yes	Yes
LRC -Members	01	01	01	01	Acess	Yes	yes	yes
Students	01	01	01	01	Access	No	No	No
Accompanying	0	0	0	0	Access	N/A	N/A	N/A

Scholarship Programme

The Scholarship Programme aims to support delegates and participants who would not otherwise be able to attend the conference. A number of Cameroonian organizations, Companies as well as

international NGOs, Embassies and consular are being contacted for funding and support of the Scholarship Programme to expand participation of women and girls with financial barriers to attend. Scholarship applications will be reviewed by a scholarship committee, and the process and criteria will be published in advance on this our website (www.lukmefcameroon.org and www.mutapolacameroon.org) as part of the organizers commitment to an accessible, transparent, accountable and fair conference Scholarship Programme. The review criteria will likely include the applicant's involvement with vulnerable communities and their commitment to transfer knowledge obtained from participating in the conference back to those communities. The Scholarship Programme is open to everyone in Cameroon. Priority will be given to those whose participation will help enhance their work in their own communities, to those who are able to assist in the transfer of skills and knowledge acquired at the Conference, and to those whose abstracts have been selected for the Conference Programme.

Although every attempt will be made to assist as many people as possible to attend, the number of scholarships that will be allocated is limited. Delegates are therefore strongly encouraged to seek other funding as well.

Full and Partial Scholarships

There are two types of scholarships: full and partial. Full scholarships include the Conference registration fee, transport fare to Limbe, shared accommodation and a daily allowance. Partial scholarships include any combination of the above. Decisions about whether a full or partial scholarship will be awarded will be decided by the Scholarship committee

Applying for a Scholarship

DELEGATES FROM THE SOUTH WEST PROVINCE:

Those interested in applying for scholarship must fill in and submit the online South West Scholarship Application Form, www.lukmefcameroon.org/SWscholarship or www.mutapolacameroon.org/SWscholarship

DELEGATES FROM OTHER PROVINCES

Those interested in applying for scholarship must fill in and submit the online national Scholarship Application Form, www.lukmefcameroon.org/Nationalscholarship or www.Mutapolacameroon.org/Nationalscholarship

Media Scholarship

An online media scholarship application form is available on this our website at www.lukmefcameroon.org/Mediascholarship or www.mutapolacameroon.org/mediascholarship Those

who do not have internet access can contact the SW women AIDS conference Scholarship Department to receive a paper copy of the application form:

Those who do not have access to the Internet can contact the Scholarship Department at the following address to receive a paper copy of the application form:

South West Women Conference on AIDS Scholarship Department

LUKMEF-Cameroon

P.O. Box 1348, Limbe

Any further questions concerning the Scholarship Programme should be addressed to scholarship@Mutapolacameroon.org or info@lukmefcameroon.org

The deadline for applying for an national scholarship is 30 May 2006.

Committees :

REGISTRATION : charged with all registration of delegates and contact formulation with partners and facilities

ACCOMODATION AND TANSPORTATIONS: Charged with all issues concerning accommodation, intercity transport, shuttle buses etc

CULTUE AND ANIMATION

ABSTRACT COMMITTEE – review and selection of abstracts

Documentation, Media and Internet committee – in Charge of certification, posters, booklets, handouts, publicity,

Security and insurance – assure total security of persons and property before, during and immediately after the conference

SCHOLASHIP - Negotiate for sponsorships, partnerships and thereof provide scholarships to selected delegates.

LEGAL SERVICES: provide legal advice to all the committees before, during and after the conference

Sponsorships:

To be an official sponsor of this conference, your organization or company will be acknowledged in most publications of the conference. Please write to us now

E-Mail: sponsor@mutapolacameroon.org

Tel/Fax 237 333 28 60

Mobile: 237 7947449

Registration:

E-Mail: Register@Mutapolacameroon.org

Tel/Fax 237 333 28 60

Mobile 237 509 89 60

Abstracts:

E-Mail: abstracts@mutapolacameroon.org

Tel/Fax 237 333 28 60

Scholarships:

E-Mail: scholarship@mutapolacameroon.org

Tel/Fax 237 333 28 60

Task Force

If you will like to volunteer in any of the organizing committees, please send a mail to the conference president at

E-Mail: Conference2006@Mutapolacameroon.org

Tel/Fax 237 333 28 60

Mobile 237 7947449

MORE INFORMATION

*More information will be available at the LUKMEF Resource Centre and at the provincial and divisional Delegations of women and the promotion of the Family as from the 25th of February 2006
Or from the following internet websites*

www.mutapolacameroon.org

www.lukmefcameroon.org