Nigeria: Edo Saca Raises Alarm Over Spread of HIV/AIDS

Benin — Edo State Action Committee on Aids (SACA) weekend raised an alarm that the spread of the dreaded HIV/AIDS in the state has increased from 4.3 to 5.2%.

Project Manager of the state’s SACA, Mrs. Nora Igbinoba, also disclosed that Nigeria now occupied the 21st position, of 166 countries, of nation’s with high number of sufferers.

Mrs. Igbinoba, who disclosed these at a workshop organised for media practitioners in the state, said only aggressive enlightenment campaign, especially at the grassroots, would stem the tide of spread of the disease.

She noted that HIV/AIDS was no moral issue, as it could be contacted through other means as blood transfusion, unsterilised needle, barbing saloon, amongst others, other than through promiscuity.

Igbinoba urged media to form a critical mass of resource persons to counsel, educate and effectively disseminate information on HIV/AIDS. She also enjoined journalists to open an office at Edo State NUJ Secretariat, where counseling and testing could be carried out, and advised them to look at the pandemic as their personal problems.

Noting that there was already enough information on HIV/AIDS, Igbinoba made case for aggressive enlightenment education of the grassroot populace for any meaningful impact to be made in the fight against the scourge. Two papers were delivered at the workshop namely ‘Basic Information on HIV/AIDS by Mrs. N.O. Igbinoba, Project manager, SACA, Edo State while the second paper ‘Mobilizing Fight against HIV/AIDS, the Role of the Media was presented by Rev. S.O. Ohonba, Community Mobilization Officer; SACA, Edo State.

To access the article online, go to http://allafrica.com/stories/200909140301.html

Nigeria: Benue Vows to Check Spread of HIV/AIDS

Makurdi — THE Benue State government has vowed to stem the tide of HIV/AIDS in the state through collaborative efforts with relevant agencies and stakeholders to ensure the reversal of prevalence rate of the dreaded disease in the state.

This assertion was made by the Special Adviser to the Benue State Governor on HIV/AIDS, Mrs. Maria Idu, while declaring open a one-day state HIV/AIDS epidemiology response and policy synthesis study stakeholders’ meeting in Makurdi.

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Mrs. Idu regretted that the state had found itself in the unfortunate situation as a highly infested state but noted that the renewed vigour on the part of government to checking the spread of the scourge in the state would soon yield positive results.

The Adviser who also doubles as the Chairman of the Benue State AIDS Control Agency (BENSACA), stressed the adverse impact of HIV/AIDS on the people and economy of the state.

She, however, expressed delight at the practical steps the government has taken to stem the tide, noting that with added commitment on the part of all stakeholders in the project the prevalence rate in the state would be reduced to the barest minimum.

Mrs. Idu further implored stakeholders in the fight against the dreaded disease to brace up to the challenge, stressing that despite deliberate actions of government in the past to check the spread of the scourge in the state, available statistics indicated that the effort did not arrest the trend, advising that all hands must be on the deck in this present effort to save the people the anguish of the disease.

To access the article online, go to http://allafrica.com/stories/200909150799.html

REACH is a collaborative program of Northwestern University and the University of Ibadan with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. REACH aims to improve HIV/AIDS prevention strategies in Nigeria through social science and community-based research.
KENYA: Anger and anxiety over "leaky" condoms
from plusnews.org

NAIROBI, 10 September 2009 (PlusNews) - Kenyan AIDS authorities are struggling to restore public confidence in condoms after an alarming news report recently showed locally stocked brands to be defective.

KTN, a local TV station, showed the condoms, purchased from vendors in the capital, Nairobi, being tested by the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS). Subjected to an electronic "freedom from holes" test, which involves filling them with water, the condoms sprung leaks.

"This will seriously affect the confidence of those who have always been consistent in using them - how do members of the public know what brand is safe and which is not?" asked Hilary Okoth, a 30-year-old Nairobi resident.

"Imagine a woman who is supposed to negotiate condom use as they are always told," he added. "The man will simply tell her 'those things leak, it doesn't make a difference'."

Hot, one of the condom brands featured in the news report, was recently banned in Zambia after the Zambia Bureau of Standards found holes in them.

Assurances

According to Nicholas Muraguri, director of the National AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases Control Programme, NASCOP, most condoms imported into the country are of sound quality.

"I want to assure Kenyans that those are isolated cases and the condoms that are distributed by the government - which account for 75 percent of what is used - are actually of high quality and pass WHO [UN World Health Organization] standards," he told IRIN/PlusNews.

KEBS - responsible for quality control of products sold in Kenya - does not routinely test imported condoms.

"We cannot deny there are cases of low quality condoms in the country because they have not been passing through the Kenya Bureau of Standards for quality assurance," Muraguri said.

"The government is joking; how can a product that involves saving human life be allowed into the country without going through rigorous quality tests?" Okoth questioned.

Muraguri said NASCOP had asked KEBS to test all brands of condoms sold in Kenya for safety, with a view to banning those found to be defective; the bureau is due to release a preliminary report on 11 September.

"I think we need to do more in monitoring the condoms that enter the country," said James Gesami, assistant minister of public health. "We are endangering the lives of our people by letting condoms that cannot stand the quality test into the market."

Condoms are a key component of Kenya's HIV prevention strategy, with at least 160 million distributed in the country annually by the government.

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