

# APPG AIDS Newsletter February & March 2005

## **News and Updates**

On 9<sup>th</sup> March a meeting entitled "Making the Money Work" took place in London between UNAIDS and the UK, French and American Governments.

In a pre-meeting the APPGs on AIDS and on Population and Reproductive Health met with DFID minister Gareth Thomas MP to discuss the agenda. The aim of the "Making the Money Work" meeting was to ensure better coordination between donating countries and corporations to ensure donations are used productively in the international fight against HIV / AIDS.

## On 11<sup>th</sup> March Tony Blair launched the Commission for Africa's report *Our Common Interest* at the British Museum.

When the Prime Minister set up commission last July he asked it for a report in early Spring 2005 to provide recommendations for the G8, EU and other partner countries to consider. The need to spend more on health to combat AIDS is one of the recommendation. The report states, "That the international community must reach a global agreement in 2005 to harmonise the current disparate response to HIV and AIDS. This must be in support of bold and comprehensive strategies by African governments that take account of power relationships between men, women and young people." The report also highlights that the face of HIV and AIDS in Africa is that of a young woman, estimating that 60% of the people affected with HIV in Africa are female.

The Commission urged wealthy nations to double African aid. At the launch the Prime Minister said that the reducing poverty in Africa was "the fundamental challenge of our

generation". Sir Bob Geldof, a member of the Commission, urged the rich countries to "get real or to be ashamed forever".

## On 4<sup>th</sup> February there was a two hour debate on HIV/ AIDS in the House of Lords following an unstarred question from Baroness Northover.

The question was: What further plans does [the Government] have to help tackle the AIDS epidemic and support the increasing number of HIV/AIDS orphans in Africa and elsewhere?

The Baroness stated that was surely no greater challenge facing development than the HIV/AIDS pandemic and voiced concerns that too many targets were being missed. On behalf of the Government Lord Triesman acknowledged the enormity of the challenge. He emphasised the spending commitment to HIV/ AIDS of £1.5 billon over the next three years and the Government's support for the five pillars of UNICEF's Strategic Framework for the Protection, Care and Support of Orphans and Children Made Vulnerable by HIV/AIDS. In direct answer to the Baroness's question he detailed the work carried out by DFID's field offices.

## The Health Select Committee recently held three hearings.

The first two were on *New Developments in HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health Policies* and discussed accessing treatment for HIV/AIDS and the problems of postcode prescribing and charging regime. The last one was on the Government's *Public Health White Paper* and was addressed by the Secretary of State for Health John Reid and Public Health Minister Melanie Johnson MP.

## **Recently published:**

**The APPG on Population, Development and Reproductive Health** published a report called *The Missing Link!* The report investigates the missing link between reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. The report can be obtained on <a href="https://www.appg-popdevrh.org.uk">www.appg-popdevrh.org.uk</a>

The Department of Health published *Delivering Choosing Health*, a plan detailing how the Commitments in the *Public Health White Paper* will be translated into benefits for local communities. It can be found at "What's new in publications" on www.dh.gov.uk

The Department for International Development published Partnerships for poverty reduction: rethinking conditionality coinciding with an intergovernmental meeting in Paris in March this year. This report commits the UK to build partnerships with countries based on their commitment to poverty reduction, human rights, and strong financial management. It is available at <a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/conditionality.pdf">http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/conditionality.pdf</a>

House of Commons International Development Committee: (1) Departmental Report 2004: The Government response to the Committee's eighth report of session 2003-2004. (2) Second Special Report of Session 2004-2005. These reports are available at <a href="http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary\_committees/international\_development.cfm">http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary\_committees/international\_development.cfm</a>

### **Recent APPG AIDS events:**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> February the APPG AIDS held a meeting on the issue of criminalisation of people who have knowingly transmitter HIV to others. **Matthew Weait**, Barrister and Lecturer from Keele University and **Chris Morley** Policy and Publications Coordinator from George House Trust spoke at the event. Both speakers highlighted the lack of public policy on this matter, and it was clear that this topic will have to be returned to.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> March Ruder Finn Inc. launched **Treat with Respect** a report by Professor Brian Gazzard and Doctors Jane Anderson, Jonathan Ainsworth and Chris Wood. This report on HIV, Immigration and Public Health makes strong recommendations on how HIV-positive immigrants could be more humanely and efficiently treated and forward how puts changes Government policy on HIV and AIDS could facilitate better public health and better treatment of HIV-positive immigrants. At the Breakfast launch MPs and the sector had a Question and Answer Session with the authors, which was chaired by Neil Gerrard MP.

### **Other News**

Once the General Election is called MPs and their staff, including those who run All Party Parliamentary Groups, will have to vacate Westminster. Neil Gerrard MP will not be available to work for the Group as it formally ceases to exist until it can be reformed after the election. Aviva Bresky, the group's administrator will be working from home and will be able to attend the meetings. After dissolution Parliament she can be contacted on her mobile 07931 901 954. Her Parliamentary email (breskya@parliament.uk) should still Alternatively one can try be working. avivabresky@yahoo.co.uk.

#### **Forthcoming Events:**

There are no events planned prior to the anticipated General Election. However, once the Group has been reformed it hopes to hold a welcome back meeting for members at the start of new session.