CONCEPT NOTE
African Union Commission Joint Consultative Workshop on HIV interventions in AU Peace Support Operations

1. Background

Conflicts, internal emergencies, massive displacement of populations and complex humanitarian crises have long been identified as fuelling factors for the spread of HIV infection.

Peace Keeping Missions (PKMs)/Peace Support Operations (PSOs) have become necessary to return stability and security to affected communities, countries, and regions. These Missions involve movement of troops from regions with different HIV prevalence, peace keepers, usually young, staying long periods away from home and working in volatile environments with limited medical care and under stressful conditions. PKOs/PSOs have therefore been recognized as potential high risk environments for HIV transmission for both the peace keepers and host communities.

The United Nations Security council’s resolution 1983 (2011) which builds on the first council action on HIV/AIDS, resolution 1308 (2000) was unanimously adopted in a meeting presided by President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon and attended by several other African Heads of State and Governments. This resolution encouraged the incorporation of HIV Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support in the implementation of peace keeping mandates. In line with this commitment is also the newly adopted Declaration of the Special Summit of the Africa Union on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (16 July 2013), in which African members states commit to address the link between poverty, health, peace and security and development, as well as accelerate HIV prevention programmes focusing on young people, women and girls and other vulnerable populations.

The African Union (AU) became involved in peace support operations close to a decade now. Since then it has become a major contributor to peace keeping/peace support initiatives in Africa; Somalia and Mali being recent examples. A brief encounter with some of its contingents revealed that there is no uniformity with regards to how HIV issues are addressed among uniformed personnel in the Troop and Police contributing countries (TCCs and PCCs). In addition, there is no agreed protocol being followed by all the TCCs and PCCs in the mission area. This therefore creates lack of consistency in managing HIV issues in the mission area and lack of a coordinated system to address HIV issues and protect uniform and civilian personnel and host community.
The AU HIV and AIDS Workplace Policy was developed in light of the commitments expressed by the Heads of State and Government of Africa. It was adopted by the AU Commission in April 2009 and launched in December 2011. With the African Union increasingly undertaking Peace Support Operations, becoming more involved in post-conflict reconstruction and development and building of an African Standby Force, implementing its HIV workplace policy and developing procedures and infrastructure to address HIV within its Mission area is a priority.

As part of the initiative to implement this Workplace Policy and ensure consistency in managing HIV and AIDS in the AU workplace, this workshop is planned to get all the stakeholders to a consultative meeting to discuss and agree on how best to mainstream HIV into AU PSOs (on the understanding that AU Field Missions are also AU workplaces) and develop a plan of action for AU Peace Keepers and other staff on the ground.

2. Justification

Africa continues to be more affected by HIV than any other region of the world, contributing about 69% of the global statistics of persons living with HIV. The UNAIDS special report on Africa (Update May 2013) has reported positive trends with regards to the HIV situation in Africa, indicating that new HIV infections and AIDS related deaths are decreasing. Despite these positive trends, in 2011 there were still 1.8 million new HIV infections across the continent, and 1.2 million people died of AIDS-related illnesses. The report affirms that AU leadership is essential to reverse the epidemic.

Considering the specificity of HIV and AIDS dynamics in pre, during and post conflict situations, the workshop will address the key vulnerabilities and rights of the uniformed forces and host communities with regards to HIV and Peace Support Operations and will enable the AU Commission to develop a coordinated and sustainable response to HIV and AIDS among its PSOs, with the active participation of all the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) and contingents.

The PSOs provide the opportunity to reach uniformed forces, civilians and their families with HIV prevention, care and support information and services. PSOs could therefore contribute in a meaningful way to sustaining the momentum to reduce the spread of HIV, protect the gains already achieved and reverse the negative impact of the HIV pandemic in Africa.

**Objectives**

a. To gain understanding of the current practices by TCCs and PCCs, with regards to the management of HIV issues at the different stages of Peace Support Operations (pre, during and post deployment periods).

b. To support TCCs and PCCs in the development of comprehensive HIV programs for their uniformed forces on AU Peace Support Operations.

3. Expected outcomes
a. An agreed upon protocol on how HIV issues will be mainstreamed at all levels of AU PSOs in line with the AU HIV and AIDS Workplace Policy.

b. Recommendation for a comprehensive plan for key HIV interventions at the AU PSOs during deployment that is best suited to the needs of AU PS contingents with appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

4. Languages

The workshop will be in English and French with simultaneous interpretation.

5. Participants (about 40)

- African Union Commission Peace and Security Operations Department (PSOD)
- African Union Commission Medical planners
- UN Office to AU Medical logistic officer
- African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)
- Directors of Medical Services of TCCs (Burundi, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Djibouti and Kenya) and PCCs (Nigeria, Uganda, Angola and Ghana)
- Force Medical Officers of African Union Field Missions
- United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)
- United Nations Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA)
- Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
- International Labour Office Global Programme on HIV/AIDS (ILOAIDS)
- United Nations Department for Peace Keeping Operations (UNDPKO)
- World Health Organisation (WHO)
- African Union Commission Social Affairs Department (SAD) – HIV/AIDS division
- African Union Medical Services Directorate (MSD)
- African Union Human Resource Division
- African Union Commission Directorate for Women, Gender and Development

6. Venue:

Joint Consultative Workshop on HIV interventions in AU Peace Support Operations

**DRAFT PROGRAMME**

Pre – workshop meeting – Monday 7th October, 2013

**Day 1 - Tuesday 8th October, 2013**

**Morning**
- Opening ceremony
- Presentation by Troop Contributing Countries on their HIV policies and practices with regards to troop deployment for AU Peace Support Operations or other Missions/ Open discussion

**Afternoon**
- Presentations on HIV management in PKOs – UNAIDS, ILOAIDS. Sharing of experiences and best practices in mainstreaming HIV in PKOs - UN experience – UNSOA, DPKO, UNAMID.
- Review of the aspects related to HIV issues of the AU PSO Health Manual for PSOs and AU HIV workplace Policy. (AU Medical Service Directorate)

**Day 2 – Wednesday 9th October, 2013**

**Morning**
- Working groups to work on different aspects of HIV protocol

**Afternoon**
- Continue on working groups to discuss aspect of Protocol
- Report back on draft protocol

**Day 3 – Thursday 10th October, 2013**

**Morning**
- Presentation of the draft protocol to be considered by the AU PSOD
Afternoon

✓ Working group to discuss key interventions to be included in the plan of action, indicating levels of responsibilities and division of labour

✓ Presentation on the draft plan for HIV intervention activities at the mission area

✓ Closing ceremony
# LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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<th>Number of Participants</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>African Union Commission Peace and Security Operations Department (PSOD)</td>
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**Other costs**
Media coverage - AUC/ ILO – AU/ ILO Websites, Synergy, Peace & Security newsletter, Pictures, Video coverage