



CONSENSUS STATEMENT

DELIVERING ANTIRETROVIRAL DRUGS IN EMERGENCIES: NEGLECTED BUT FEASIBLE

Participants in an expert consensus meeting on "providing antiretroviral drugs as part of comprehensive HIV services to populations in emergency settings" co-organized by WHO, UNHCR, UNAIDS, MSF and UNICEF on 19-20 September 2006 in Geneva, **noted with concern** that populations affected by emergencies have been neglected in the provision of essential HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care services, in particular, in the delivery of life-saving antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) for prevention and treatment of HIV infections.

Global targets towards universal access for HIV services will not be achieved if populations in emergency settings are excluded. These populations account for up to 200 million people, of whom 30% live in Africa, the region of highest HIV prevalence in the world.

Although ARV delivery has been shown to be feasible and affordable in low-income settings, a large number of people living in emergency-affected countries do not have access to quality HIV services, including ARVs.

The meeting discussed delivery of ARVs in emergency settings and **reached a consensus on:**

- the minimum requirements and package of services needed to deliver ARVs for HIV prevention and treatment in emergency settings;
- continuation of ARV treatment for those who were previously on treatment;
- initiation of ARVs for people who meet minimum requirements;
- the need to scale up interventions for prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission;

- the need to ensure delivery of post-exposure prophylaxis for all exposed health workers and post-exposure prophylaxis and rape management for survivors of rape; and
- the setting up of procurement systems that can respond to urgent ARV supply needs in emergency settings, while preventing stock piling and wastage of drugs.

The meeting concluded:

- That emergencies, such as natural disasters and conflicts, should not affect one's access to HIV services and that the provision of such services is not only feasible, but an inalienable human right and a public health necessity; and
- The delivery of ARVs in emergency settings, should be included in national strategic plans, through emergency preparedness, and be resourced and implemented within a common framework that includes all partners, national governments and regional authorities, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and donors. ARV delivery should also be included as part of comprehensive HIV services in emergency settings.

Participants of the meeting, **called upon governments, NGOs and international donors to give due attention to populations in emergency settings within national AIDS plans and to integrate HIV/AIDS service planning into all stages of humanitarian assistance preparedness and funding schemes.**

The meeting was also attended by international experts representing UN OCHA, UNFPA, WFP, IFRC, Save the Children UK, AVSI, IRC and IOM.