



INTERNATIONAL
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MICROBICIDES

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Consultation on Microbicide Introduction in Africa and India Successfully Concluded Today

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Toronto – A group of international experts gathered here today to discuss strategies for optimizing the future introduction of microbicides in Africa and India. Microbicides are vaginal products being developed to reduce the transmission of HIV during sexual intercourse. Microbicides could take the form of a gel, cream, film, suppository or sponge, or be contained in a vaginal ring that releases the active ingredient gradually.

The event was organized by the International Partnership for Microbicides (IPM) with funding from the European Commission as part of a three-year, €870,000 grant for country analyses to accelerate access to microbicides by women in developing countries. The project falls under the European Programme for Action to Confront HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis in developing countries and is financed under the European Commission's thematic programme on Aid for poverty-related diseases in developing countries.

Participants included representatives from Africa and India, as well as the donor community and civil society. Presentations were made on experiences in introducing reproductive health products, and introduction planning efforts for microbicide candidates that are currently undergoing efficacy trials. In addition, there were presentations on studies that examined factors impacting microbicide introduction in Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and India. These studies were partially funded by the EC through the aforementioned grant to IPM. In the afternoon, participants provided input on the design of a forthcoming modeling exercise to determine optimal microbicide introduction scenarios in India and Africa. The modeling exercise will be commissioned by IPM with EC funding in 2007.

Historically, it has taken decades for benefits of scientific innovation to reach the developing world. The microbicide field is committed to expediting widespread availability of any effective product, reaching those who are most in need first. With five microbicide candidates in large-scale efficacy trials and the next generation of microbicides well into safety studies, the meeting was timely. There was agreement that efforts must be stepped up to ensure that microbicide introduction occurs effectively and as rapidly as possible.

About IPM

IPM was established in 2002 to accelerate the development and accessibility of microbicides to prevent the transmission of HIV in women. By screening compounds, designing optimal formulations, establishing manufacturing capacity, developing trial sites and conducting large scale efficacy trials, the organization works to improve the efficiency of all efforts to develop and deliver safe and effective microbicides as soon as possible.

IPM is a co-convenor of the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS (<http://womenandaids.unaids.org/>), an initiative of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). More information on IPM is available at www.ipm-microbicides.org.