

# REPORT ON THE HIV and AIDS BRIEFING MEETING



**HELD AT TAJ SHAMSAN HOTEL,  
TAIZ**

**10<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2007**

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**PROGRESSIO**

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## Pre-amble

This report highlights the proceedings of the meeting held with different stakeholders in Taiz governorate with the intent of introducing them to the HIV and AIDS project-Building from the base currently being implemented by Women's Forum for Research and Training (WFRT) in partnership with Progressio- Yemen. Having started implementing some of the activities, it was found relevant to let stakeholders know about what has been done and what the scope of the project will be so that we could find ways of working with them to make greater impact. This meeting also provided a forum for us to seek and get ideas about how to implement the project better.

## Participants

These were drawn from a variety of sectors to include, local councillors, representatives from NAP, NGOs, journalists, Imams and the participants from the previously held Training of Trainers' Workshop on HIV and AIDS. In all it attracted 44 participants.

## Aim of the Meeting

To explain the scope of the HIV and AIDS project and explore ways of working with various stakeholders in the process of implementation.

## Welcome remarks

The meeting was officially opened by the Director of Women's Forum for Research and Training (WFRT) who welcomed everybody to the convention.

She highlighted the reasons why WFRT is interested in working in the area of HIV and AIDS pointing out that being a Human Rights Organisation on one hand while HIV and AIDS is a human rights issue on the other, there was urgent need for the organisation's intervention. Dr Suad noted that since the main challenge of Yemen in relation to this pandemic is a lack of information about the disease, people should have access to it for their protection, since they are entitled to it as a right.



**A section of participants at the briefing** Similarly people living with HIV have rights like any other person and as such they should not be violated by virtue of their status. People need to be empowered to handle this disease because often times they feel that they have no choice in dealing with it and that the only option left to them is death since they have no access to information about services that could help them lead more productive lives. Unfortunately the most vulnerable are the women and girls hence the need for them to be empowered to protect themselves. The society as a whole too has the right to be protected from HIV and AIDS. She also said that there is need to change the prevailing politics which only work to make the HIV and AIDS issue more problematic.

According to Dr Suad, WFRT is working on areas such as poverty and providing information to the society since these are some of the issue that directly affect HIV and AIDS hence the relevance of this project to WFRT's work.

## Project over view

The Progressio DW and HIV and AIDS Trainer, Kasozi Silvester made a presentation on the scope of the HIV and AIDS project highlighting among other things Progressio's motivation to get involved in HIV and AIDS work in Yemen, its partnership with WFRT, the objectives of the project, intervention strategy as well as a highlight of the major activities to be carried out (*see appendix*).

He stressed the fact that although Progressio only has a partnership with WFRT, it is open to working with other players in the sector of health in general and HIV and AID in particular especially the National AIDS Programme.

## Plenary Session

After the initial presentations by the Director for WFRT and the Progressio DW, the meeting was opened up to the audience to give opinions and make enquiries about issues that they wanted clarity about. Key among issue discussed were

- The awareness about HIV and AIDS this disease in Taiz has actually reached good levels courtesy of the different workshops done by different organizations. One of such organizations being The Red Crescent, a health organization and National AIDS Programme.
- One of the reasons that deprive people from discussing the issue is shyness given the structural set of society.
- The information about this disease must be available for every one for their safety.
- The statistics given by the government about the number of people infected doesn't reflect the reality. The government itself probably doesn't know the real number of those people with the disease who are infected hence the need to find out the facts other than being defensive.
- There must be a preventive strategy so that we can protect ourselves against this disease. Key to this is to know and get the truth about this HIV and AIDS through awareness raising.
- Poverty is the reason why some of the women and girls end up in



**A plenary session in progress**

- prostitution so they can earn a living and by doing so putting themselves at risk of infection.
- We should not deny the problem of HIV and AIDS by saying that the number of the infected people is less than in other countries and as such that we are safe.
- Non-government organizations play a complimentary role to the government in the fight against HIV and AIDS for the latter alone cannot work on this issue and succeed.

The common consensus though after this meeting was a need for a concerted effort to fight the pandemic by putting all differences aside and fighting the common enemy who in this case is HIV and AIDS.



### Handing over of certificates

The participants of the then previously concluded Training of Trainers' (TOT) workshop on HIV and AIDS (5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> December, 2007) were called upon to receive their certificates of participation. This ceremony was presided over by the Taiz NAP Co-ordinator, Dr Saeed Sufian (left), the Director of WFRT, Dr Suad (2<sup>nd</sup> right) and the workshop Trainers, Kasozi Silvester (right) and Rasha Abdulwahab (2<sup>nd</sup> left). After this function, the meeting was dissolved.

### Conclusion

This meeting went a long way in defining not only the reasons for WFRT's involvement in HIV and AIDS work but also its partnership with Progressio. Having brought together different stakeholders it ensured that they understand the organisation's mandate in fighting HIV but above all to seek their support in implementing with synergy.