



# **Civil Society Report Back to SANAC Plenary Session 27<sup>th</sup> May 2008**

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# Overview

- Weakness of SANAC Secretariat
- Summary of some sector's activities
- Issues for resolution by SANAC
- Issues for resolution by the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC)
- Release and discussion of key reports by DOH

# SANAC Secretariat

- Despite a resolution at the 10<sup>th</sup> September Plenary meeting that the Secretariat would be staffed as a matter of urgency, 10 months later not a single position has been filled.
  - This incapacity is impeding implementation of the NSP
  - It renders the secretariat unable to monitor and evaluate implementation of the NSP.
  - It holds back the development of SANAC sectors – is not able to support all the demands on it.
- Issue has been raised repeatedly, including at 17 April PIC where it was agreed that all positions would be advertised together. This did not happen.
- Civil society believes that location of secretariat in the DOH remains a problem due to Minister of Health's hostility to SANAC.
- **Call for SANAC Chairperson to intervene and resolve these issues speedily.**

# Summary of some sector's Activities

# Disability Sector

- An organised and active sector within civil society, despite challenges
- Seen as a best practice by UNAIDS
- Held summit on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2008
  - Attended by myself and the Minister in Office of Presidency
  - Launched report on the response of the sector to the 2000-2005 NSP and impact of HIV and AIDS on disabled people

# Research Sector

- Also one of the more active sectors
- Launched the 2008 *National HIV Behaviour and Health* household survey this morning:
  - Survey will assess 15,000 households
- Have secured R6.5million to coordinate the compilation of evidence necessary for the *Positive Prevention Campaign* in Gert Sibande (Mpumalanga Province). Permission granted, will start soon.
- Supporting the office of the Deputy Chair of SANAC with the appointment of two staff members.
  
- **Higher Education Sector** is about to launch a sero-prevalence and KAP study among 25,000 staff and students of tertiary institutions
- Raised R59m to support tertiary HIV prevention efforts for next 18 months

# NGO Sector

- Continue to conduct activities along monthly themes aligned to the NSP
  - January – Testing
  - February – PMTCT
  - March – Greater involvement on PLHIV
  - April – NGO sustainability
  - May – NGO sustainability and African Unity (in response to Xenophobic violence)
- Training and advocacy in developing HIV competent communities. Have reached 400 NGOs per month across 3 provinces. Mobile testing is available at each meeting.
  - Gauteng - 180 – 200 NGOs p/m
  - North West - about 100 p/m
  - Limpopo - about 130 p/m
- NGO sector sit on a DOH task team on building AIDS Competent communities
- Have recently employed a full time SANAC NGO sector coordination
- Sector convenor Denise Hunt is part of the UNGASS delegation

# Children's Sector

- Another of SANAC's active and very organised sectors
- Sector summit 11<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> June in Durban
  - Particular focus on inter-sectoral collaboration - encouraging all sectors to interrogate how they are working towards realising the objectives of the NSP that relate to children
- Very active in all SANAC structures and making good use of raising issues through the structures:
  - E.g. Clarifying that if an ARV site is registered that it is registered as suitable for children as well as adults (awaiting direction by Dr Colombo who has been delegated by DOH to recommend).
- Children's sector have representation on KZN PAC in their own right (not included among NGO representation). Similar request to WC is pending.
- Have begun preparing to involve children as active members of the sector.
  - Working from the ground up but working to ensure that conditions are ethical and appropriate.
- Have established a M&E Project:
  - Raising awareness of some of the issues – includes picking up provincial level problems from CBO's
- Regular reporting to the CHANN Working Group, the full network and SANAC.
- Particular focus on children who are normally excluded and on collaboration between sectors.

# Law & Human Rights Sector

- Wide collaboration
- Work extensively on the rights to health of refugees (including access to healthcare)
  - Last PIC agreed to sector meeting with DoJCD, SAPS, DHA
  - Submission to the Human Rights Commission
- Trying to focus on vulnerable groups to ensure they're not overlooked in implementation of NSP
- Leading role in drafting Procedural Guidelines SANAC (adopted today)
- Convened a civil society male circumcision consultative session, May 08
- Met with Traditional Leaders sector and developing a memorandum of understanding
- Launched a weekly HIV/AIDS legal clinic in Johannesburg

# Men's Sector

- Sector summit proposed for 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> June
- Have been working on overcoming difficulties, but moving in the right direction.
- Have sourced funding from UNAIDS to support the development of their Sector Implementation Plan.

# Faith Based Sector

- Informational seminars in 7 Provinces during March and April.
- MTCT campaign officially launched in Nkomazi District (Mpumalanga).
- Concerted effort to encourage men to test and to support their partners.

# PWA/TAC

- Collaboration with Faith-based sector to conduct training and informational sessions on PMTCT in 7 provinces.
- Written and verbal submissions on the draft Medicines and Related Substances Bill and the National Health Amendment Bill
- March on Pretoria High Court during the SANDF trial 16<sup>th</sup> May
- GBV march on 23<sup>rd</sup> May in Cape Town
- *"In Our Lives"* book series launched in February

# TAC Mpumalanga Campaign

- Nkomazi District Municipality
  - Targeted four communities in a door-to-door education campaign around the new PMTCT protocols
  - Key intention was to mobilise men to take part
  - Over 5 days the campaign:
    - Reached 2850 people
    - Visited 339 households
    - Visited 7 churches during their Sunday service
    - Visited a high school and spoke with 300 learners
  - 80% of those reached were female
  - Found that majority of churches don't have an HIV & AIDS programme

# Women's Sector

- Sector summit for 27<sup>th</sup> – 28th June
- Compiled database of sector organisations
- Participation at all levels of SANAC
- Established communication between SANAC women's sector representatives
- Distribute a bi-monthly newsletter
- Hold regular meetings with reference group
- Have obtained funding from Oxfam & Irish Aid

# General comments

- Sector Summits:
  - are important
  - but more important that action leads sectors into summits and that summits are carried through into action.
- Some sectors inactive
- Sectors got to report on **impact**, not just activities

# **Priority Issues for resolution by SANAC**

- Policy on Male Circumcision
- SANDF policy on HIV testing
- Status of Provincial AIDS Councils

# Policy on Male Circumcision

- Large degree of consensus within civil society on MC
- 20<sup>th</sup> May civil society meeting involving traditional leaders, women's, men's, PWA, law and human rights, NGO and research sectors.
  - Consensus paper drafted. Submitted to SANAC today for consideration
- Support DOH proposal for a workshop on MC but call for it to be a joint DoH and SANAC workshop to marry the two parallel processes.
- **Recommend decision on MC policy before next SANAC plenary.**

# Discrimination in the SANDF

- 16<sup>th</sup> of May saw the successful conclusion of the case against the SANDF policy of HIV testing. In terms of the court order the SANDF:
  - can no longer automatically exclude HIV positive people from recruitment, external deployment and promotion;
  - must amend its health classification policy within six months to allow for individualised health assessments of recruits and current members of the armed forces.
- The current policy is unlawful immediately but that a new policy must come into effect within six months. New policy must be submitted to the Pretoria High Court.
- Creates a lacuna: what happens between now and finalisation of new policy?
- **Request SANDF to seek assistance from SANAC with revision of the policy before the 6 months granted.**

# Prov AIDS Councils

- On 26<sup>th</sup> May a Provincial AIDS Council workshop was held.
- Some of the resolutions were that:
  - PACs should be chaired by Premiers
  - PACs represented on SANAC;
  - Two way communication between SANAC and the PACs and LACs should be improved;
  - Provincial Councils needs adequate **Provincial level** secretarial support and AIDS councils, at provincial and local level, need dedicated staff;
  - Resolved to create a Task Team. The TT would:
    - Develop and finalise PAC and LAC guidelines (by August 2008)
    - Decide where the PAC secretariat should be located
- The workshop recognised that AIDS is a developmental issue that has implications well beyond the health sector and health services. It called for **multi-sectoral collaboration** and for the DOH not to be charged with sole responsibility for tackling the epidemic.

# **Issues for resolution by the Inter-Ministerial Committee**

- **National Stigma Framework:**

- Framework was finalised but has remained unsigned by DOH for 2 years.
- **Civil society calls for its urgent finalisation and release**

- **Conditions of counsellors:**

- Stipends for many VCT counsellors are being paid for only part of their term. This appears to be a nationwide problem.
- DOH outsources to NGO's to pay counsellors, but NGOs often take a cut for themselves and unable to support counsellors etc.
- **Civil society calls for an urgent investigation and commitment to proper terms and conditions of employment for critical 'volunteers'.**

- **Stopping of Disability and Social Grants**
  - Disability grants are being withdrawn for two reasons:
    - When recipients are institutionalised (typical of MDR/XDR patients)
    - When recipients increase their CD4 counts above 200
  - Is causing people to default on treatment.
- Call for DSD to:
  - Immediately change policy on grants for people held in state institutions
  - Urgently introduce a chronic disease grant
- **PMTCT: Rural doctors / conflict over Manguzi Hospital**
  - The status of PMTCT guidelines – are guidelines a ceiling or floor for care?
  - If PHC facilities can find additional funding (i.e. donations) to improve quality of care this should be permitted.
- Call for meeting with DOH to resolve this issue

- **Harm Reduction**

- The Portfolio Committee on Social Development meets next week to finalise the *Prevention and Treatment for Substance Abuse Bill*.

- The proposed bill promotes abstinence only and is in contradiction with the NSP (and WHO guidelines) which recommend access to harm reduction measures.

- TAC memorandum submitted to SANAC and included in packs.

- Call for DSD and Portfolio committee to revise its position.

# Amnesty International report on Rural Women –

‘I am at the lowest end of all’ (March 2008)

- Copies of the report are available online. Some available here or from ALP.
  - In response to the report letters to the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Social Development have been pouring in from all over the world. I have been cc'd on all the letters and a large pile is accumulating in my office.
- Recommendations aimed at eliminating discrimination in the realisation of the right to health:
  - Address social and economic inequalities affecting women
  - Ensure transport costs and distances in rural areas do not impede access to health services
  - Increase accessibility and availability of ART services in rural areas
  - Ensure access to adequate food
- Recommendations aimed at combating violence and other forms of discrimination against women:
  - Prevent violence against women
  - Improve women's access to civil and criminal remedies in cases of violence against women
  - Increase men's awareness of and respect for women's rights
  - Encourage assessment by health personnel of risks to women
  - Assist women in disclosing their HIV status safely

## **Call for a bilateral meeting between with DOH & DSD**

These matters are urgent but civil society believe they can be resolved.

- In the spirit of cooperation Civil Society request a bilateral meeting with the Departments of Health and of Social Development to resolve these issues.

Release and discussion by  
SANAC of key reports

# 2007 Ante-natal survey

- The DOH have confirmed that the 2007 ante-natal survey has been concluded and is being prepared for release.
  - Request that the survey be presented to SANAC structures prior to national release – to coordinate a response and align strategies
  - The briefing can remain confidential until release.
- Also request the report on the Mid-Term review of Operation Plan on Comprehensive Care, Management and Treatment (CCMT).

# Appendix

## Staffing of secretariat Plenary resolution

- *Minutes of 10th September Plenary meeting: Pg.21 & 22*
- PIC resolution on advertising secretariat positions
  - *Draft minutes of PIC meeting 17<sup>th</sup> April: Pg.5*
- Research sector - 2008 National HIV Behaviour and Health household launch
  - *Dr Shisana Presentation at launch*
  - *Press Release (SABSSM3 Launch Press Release)*
- Higher Education Sector sero-prevalence launch and KAP study
- GBV march on 23rd May in Cape Town – Memorandum
  - *Final Memorandum for GBV march on 23 May 2008.doc*
- Male Circumcision consensus paper
  - *Final - Civil Society position paper on Male Circumcision 22 May 2008.pdf*
- SANDF trial court victory press release (16<sup>th</sup> of May)
  - *SANDF Press Release 20080516.pdf*

# Appendix

- Provincial AIDS Councils resolutions
  - *PCA Resolutions.pdf*
- National Stigma Framework
  - National Stigma Framework.pdf
- Disability Grant – memorandum
  - *XDR TB Memo - Dr Graeme Meintjies.pdf*
  - *AIDS Consortium- anecdote on DG May 08.pdf*
- Harm Reduction - Prevention and Treatment for Substance Abuse Bill submission and TAC memo
  - *Harm Reduction Letter to SANAC Plenary.pdf*
- Amnesty International - 'I am at the lowest end of all' (March 2008)
  - <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR53/001/2008/en>
- Law & Human Rights meeting with DoJCD, SAPS, DHA
  - *Draft minutes of PIC meeting 17<sup>th</sup> April: Pg.20*
- SANAC Procedural Guidelines
  - *SANAC procedural guidelines.pdf*

# Appendix

- Memorandum of understanding between L&HR sector and Traditional Leaders
  - *Not yet finalised.*
- ProBono.org launched
  - *ProBono.Org flier.pdf*
- Written and verbal submissions on the draft Medicines and Related Substances Bill and the National Health Amendment Bill
  - *Joint TAC & ALP submission on Medicines Bill, 2008.pdf*
  - *Joint TAC & ALP submission on draft National Health Amendment Bill.pdf*

*Each of these references can be obtained directly from my assistant Paul Booth: [sanacdeputy@alp.org.za](mailto:sanacdeputy@alp.org.za) or 011 356 4114*

# Thank You

