



UN Cares - What you should know

Promoting compassion, non-discrimination, health and wellbeing

The UN is in the frontline of the fight against the spread of HIV infection, treatment, care and support for those affected by the epidemic. We encounter the impact of the epidemic first hand, as we ardently advocate for people to understand the disease, go for testing, seek treatment and behave responsibly to stem the spread of the virus. We seek increased funding and conducive policies to mitigate the social and economic impact of the epidemic. As flag bearers of the protection of the rights and dignity of all, we campaign against stigma and discrimination of people affected by HIV and AIDS. And, our work should mirror how we apply these principles internally.

In May 2008, the UN Secretary General launched UN Cares, a system wide work place programme on HIV and AIDS. UN Cares is about compassion to personnel, commitment to reduce the impact of the epidemic and explicit intolerance to discrimination. Ban Ki-Moon stated, "Since the early 1990s, the impact of the virus on our work and on the communities we serve has been historic in magnitude. At the same time, our workplace, our staff and our families are profoundly affected."

This programme draws upon the best of previous agency-specific programmes. It is based on 10 minimum standards applicable across the UN and requires offices to avail the staff, time and resources needed to meet the standards by the end of 2011 - from training, counselling and testing to insurance coverage and access to condoms.

The UN's personnel policy on HIV/AIDS upholds the protection of one's privacy and does not require disclosure of HIV status. No one is required to have an HIV test to gain employment, remain employed, or have his/her contract renewed, irrespective of the type or length of their contract. People who are ill because of HIV infection will have the same rights and benefits as those who are ill from any other cause.

UN Cares is led by an inter-agency task force, to ensure inclusion of all UN personnel and their families. In Malawi, Sandra Mapemba (UNFPA) is the UN Cares Chair. Other members are Richard Banda (WHO/Co-Chair), Rachel Maganga (UNICEF), Julia Chagunda (FAO), Pamela Mkwamba (UNAIDS), Siphwiwe Kandiero (UNDP), Anne Muwonge (UNHCR), Keith Chioza (WFP), Grace Chilambo (World Bank), Dr George Lutwama UN Doctor, Juliana Lunguzi as President of the Staff Association and Miriam Nyoni for UN Plus.

Dickson Mchiliko, UN Cares Coordinator (previously HELP Coordinator) manages the implementation of the work place programme and supports the UN Plus. The UN's policy, minimum standards and other resources on HIV can be found on www.uncares.org

"We are planning several innovative, creative and inclusive activities to promote the principles of the work place policy as well as good health and general wellbeing. There is a genuine interest in reproductive health, nutrition and other non-communicable diseases such as cancer and diabetes. People also want information on other social issues that affect their mental state from wills, inheritance and managing finances," says Mchiliko.



UN+ is an advocacy group that brings together HIV positive staff working in the UN globally. UN+ provides peer advice and works closely with UN Cares to ensure staff issues are addressed appropriately and the principles of respect, non-discrimination and confidentiality are adhered. More information is available on www.unplus.org.

UN Cares recently held successful woman-to-woman and man-to-man sessions for staff, families and friends to discuss HIV prevention and treatment, sexual reproductive health and other social and health topics. The task force is organising an all UN family fun fair scheduled for August.

Hudson Kuphanga, UNDP joins the UN Family in marking the Candlelight Memorial in remembrance of the lives lost to AIDS and demonstrating support for the children, sisters, brothers, parents, relatives, friends and colleagues living with HIV. The Candlelight Memorial has been marked since 1983, when the cause was still unknown and is now marked every year on the last Sunday of May. This year's theme is "Together we are the solution".

THE TOWN HALL MEETING

26 June - The all UN staff Town Hall meeting in June generated lively discussion and exchanges among staff and senior management. It is hoped that the quality of the dialogue and exchange of views between senior management and staff met staff expectation of the event. The UNCT will work closely with the UN Communications Group and the Staff Associations to promote more events and interactive opportunities. The meetings are now held every two months.

"The Global financial crisis continues to pose a threat to development efforts around the world. Malawi is highly dependent on international aid, but the efforts by the Government to use development aid more effectively as well as the recent successful democratic election, are paying off. I am aware of concerns about the effects of the crisis on our jobs but I would like you to know that so far we have not heard of significant shifts in development aid to Malawi. But the crisis is not over yet and we have our concerns about the impact going forward. We must continue to work smarter.



In a few weeks we will begin the Mid Term Review of the current UNDAF. During this process, we want to secure Government's enhanced ownership and leadership. We are also looking to non-traditional donors to support our work. The reform needs to be seen and assessed from the country context demonstrating improvement in the quality of our programmes.

The staff's level of knowledge of the reform process influences the quality of the UN work. The Country Team is, therefore, committed to sharing information and increasing interaction between management and staff. This meeting is one such opportunity."

Richard Dictus, UN Resident Coordinator

contd/... From the Town Hall Meeting



"If Delivering as One is to succeed, staff must understand its implications thoroughly, so that we can apply the principles and build our profile nationally as the best development partner for Malawi. There are so many opportunities for us to work better together and see a real impact on the lives of Malawians. I strongly believe in our potential to excel and make the One Team a reality. The Staff Association is here

to serve you and provide the necessary link with the UNCT. We are pursuing opportunities for our own personal growth so that our work is enjoyable and fulfilling. I appeal to you to bring your concerns to us, so that we can find solutions professionally. The development of Malawi ... It all starts with you and we need to show clearly the passion we have for ourselves, our communities and our nation!" **Juliana Lunguzi, President - UN Staff Association**



"Dear Colleagues, who ARE the United Nations in Malawi,

I express my heartfelt gratitude for you all having allowed my family and me to enjoy your most beautiful Malawi during the last 4 years. It was so special when the WFP staff and their families most generously threw me a very moving farewell party at Lake Malawi, also as it gave me 1 last chance to see your country's gorgeous natural beauty.

The one appeal that I would repeat is while I can fully appreciate the importance of honouring commitments to extended family and communities, it is even more vital for Malawians also to devote a little bit more time to themselves, their own self development, their own self worth! I have seen, but not fully understood why, so many Malawians are over-burdened with the heavy yoke of obligation and duty, way beyond the normal call of family. Surely, it is correct for us all to devote a little more precious time on ourselves, no?

One of souvenirs that a WFP colleague pointed out to me at the Lake Malawi farewell party was just to look at the number of colleagues, who had undertaken further studies, gone back to school, started University, completed their Masters degrees, won scholarships and gone abroad. They had all achieved something special, yes after some very hard work, but in just a short time, and to last them a whole lifetime and no-one can ever take that away from them! What a great investment it is to devote time to oneself and to one's own future wellbeing!

Thanks so much to all of you, UN colleagues. And especially thank you to those with whom I had the privilege to work closest - the FAO team during those few months while I was helping out - the UNRCO team while I was trying to help out there too - and of course, to all the magnificent WFP colleagues! Bye bye everyone - best wishes, always!" **Dom Scalpelli**



"I thank each and every UN Malawi staff member whom I've worked with over the last 3 years as the Head of Finance and Administration for the WFP, OMT Chair, Cluster leader and taskforce participant. I'm touched by the number of positive comments I've received regarding my performance and I'm pleased that I've impacted the performance of others. I have good memories knowing that my best effort was given and hope that I inspired my UN colleagues to do so also. Because I was always frank in my interactions with them, my parting good-bye is that I wish all my UN Malawi Colleagues continued good health, happiness, and success in their personal careers." **Barbara Clemens**

Staff on the Move

ESPERANCE FUNDIRA has served as the Resident Representative for UNFPA Malawi since 16 January 2005. In September, she takes up her new position as Representative for UNFPA Liberia. Esperance's passion for gender equity have made a real impact including the passing of the Domestic violence legislation in parliament in 2006, the 50-50 campaign and the launch of the female condom among other remarkable achievements through the support of UNFPA.



DR. DESMOND JOHNS has served as the UNAIDS Malawi Country Coordinator since August 2006 and Convenor of the UNDAF Cluster on HIV and AIDS. Dr. Johns takes up his new position as the UNAIDS Country Coordinator and Representative to the African Union in Addis Ababa in September. Dr. Johns notes, "Malawi is recognised for her efforts. With strong and dynamic national leadership combined

with strategic support from the UN and development partners, Malawi has attracted more than US\$ 600 million in funding from the Global fund, more than 250,000 people started AIDS treatment, and a decline in HIV prevalence from 14% to 12%."

CHANDRA SEKCHAR, UNICEF Chief of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, moves to UNICEF Headquarters in New York in August as the Planning Specialist. Chandra joined UNICEF Malawi in August 2005 as the M & E Specialist and was promoted to his current position in January 2008. Chandra is also the outgoing Chair of the UNDAF M & E working group.



"My experience in Malawi has been most valuable and especially as my first international post. I am proud of the M & E achievements while I have been here including the MICS survey which covered all districts in Malawi for the first time. Also, under the joint UN M & E Programme, we saw the launch of MASEDA 3.0 which is perhaps the most comprehensive database in the region, capturing MGDS, MDG and now UNDAF indicators too. Working with the UN family has been a very rewarding and enjoyable experience, both professionally and personally."

NKHANI ZATHU

Nkhani Zathu (Our News) monthly newsletter and bulletin board are compiled by UN Communications Group and capture highlights of the UN Malawi in action. For subscription, editorial policy, printing requests or contributions, please contact susan.muguro@undp.org.