

MAURITANIA

DHAPP

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HIV/AIDS
PREVENTION PROGRAM

REDUCING THE INCIDENCE OF HIV/AIDS
AMONG UNIFORMED PERSONNEL IN
SELECTED AFRICAN NATIONS AND
BEYOND

WINNING BATTLES IN THE WAR AGAINST HIV/AIDS

BACKGROUND

Country Statistics

Mauritania achieved independence from France in 1960. The estimated population of Mauritania is 3.4 million people, with an average life expectancy of 54 years. Arabic is the official language of Mauritania, which has an estimated literacy rate of 51%, unevenly distributed between men and women. In 2001, exploratory oil wells in tracts 80 km offshore indicated potential extraction at current world oil prices. Oil prospects, while initially promising, have failed to materialize. Meantime the government emphasizes reduction of poverty, improvement of health and education, and promoting privatization of the economy. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is \$1,800, with 40% of Mauritanian people living below the poverty level.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in Mauritania's general population is estimated at less than 0.70%, with approximately 12,000 people living with HIV. Risk factors are largely unknown.

Military Statistics

The Mauritanian Armed Forces (MAF) is composed of an estimated 16,000 members. Mauritania allocates 5.5% of the GDP for military expenditures. Military HIV prevalence rates are unknown.



PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

During fiscal year 2007, DHAPP staff stayed in contact with the MAF, but no funding was provided for program activities. DHAPP looks forward to future activities with the Mauritanian Armed Forces.

Proposed Future Activities

DHAPP received a proposal from the US Naval Medical Research Unit in Cairo, Egypt, for FY08 on behalf of the MAF. The objectives included (1) increase the awareness of AIDS and risk behaviors among military troops, (2) decrease stigma and discrimination for patients living with HIV among military troops, (3) improve infection control practices in health care settings to reduce medical transmission of HIV/AIDS, and (4) increase cooperation between national military troops and other stakeholders in the country, such as the Ministry of Health and nongovernmental organizations working on HIV/AIDS prevention.

