



# MOROCCO

# 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**

The estimated population of Morocco is 34 million people, with an average life expectancy of 72 years. Arabic is the official language of Morocco, which has an estimated literacy rate of 52%, unevenly distributed between men and women. Moroccan economic policies brought economic stability to the country in the early 1990s, but have not spurred growth sufficient to reduce unemployment that nears 20% in urban areas. Poverty has actually increased. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is \$3,800, with 15% of Moroccan people living below the poverty level. Morocco's GDP growth rate slowed to 2.1% in 2007 as a result of a drought that severely reduced agricultural output and necessitated wheat imports at rising world prices. Continued dependence on foreign energy and Morocco's inability to develop small- and medium-sized enterprises also contributed to the slowdown.

#### **HIV/AIDS Statistics**

The HIV prevalence rate in Morocco's general population is estimated at less than 0.1%, with approximately 19,000 people living with HIV. HIV in Morocco is mainly transmitted through heterosexual intercourse. Less-frequent modes of transmission include sexual contact with men who have sex with men, intravenous drug use, and blood or blood products.

#### **Military Statistics**

The Moroccan Royal Armed Forces (MRAF) has an estimated 200,000 troops. The Royal Armed Forces comprises the Army (includes Air Defense), Navy (includes Marines), and Air Force. Morocco allocates 5% of the GDP for the military. All new recruits are required to be tested for HIV.

## PROGRAM RESPONSE

### **In-Country Ongoing Assistance**

The MRAF implemented a prevention program for its forces beginning in 1996. The MRAF, through its Health Inspection Division, has been able to sustain an HIV/AIDS prevention program with assistance from DHAPP and the Office of Defense Cooperation at the US Embassy.



## OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

### **Prevention and Treatment**

During FY07, 10,000 troops were reached with comprehensive prevention messages and 220 peer educators were trained. The program targets young recruits for several reasons, such as international assignments and frequent displacements. In each unit targeted by the program, condoms were given to the troops after the peer education sessions.

Two (2) clinicians participated in DHAPP's *Military International HIV Training Program* in San Diego. Their training will help train other physicians and health care workers in the MRAF.

### **Proposed Future Activities**

DHAPP received a proposal from the MRAF for activities in FY08. Goals for its prevention efforts include (1) continue prevention education for troops, (2) educate health care professionals on antiretroviral therapy services, and (3) procure a mobile counseling and testing unit.