



# ZIMBABWE

# 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 population of Zimbabwe is estimated to be 12.4 million people, with an average life expectancy of 40 years. English is the official language of Zimbabwe, which has an estimated literacy rate of 91%, with even distribution between men and women. The government of Zimbabwe faces a wide variety of difficult economic problems as it struggles with an unsustainable fiscal deficit, an overvalued official exchange rate, hyperinflation, and bare store shelves. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe routinely prints money to fund the budget deficit, resulting in the steady rise of the official annual inflation rate, from 32% in 1998, to 133% in 2004, 585% in 2005, 1,000% in 2006, and 26,000% in November 2007. Private sector estimates of inflation in 2007 are well above 100,000%. Meanwhile, the official exchange rate fell from approximately 1 (revalued) Zimbabwean dollar per US dollar in 2003 to 30,000 per US dollar in 2007. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita has dropped to \$500, with 68% of Zimbabwean people living below the poverty level.

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

The HIV prevalence rate in the general population of Zimbabwe is estimated at 20.1%, with approximately 1.8 million individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Most cases of HIV in Zimbabwe are spread through multi-partner heterosexual sex.

#### **Military Statistics**

The Zimbabwe Defense Forces (ZDF) is estimated at approximately 40,000 members. Zimbabwe allocates 3.8% of the GDP for military expenditures. No HIV prevalence data are available for the Zimbabwean Defense Forces.

## PROGRAM RESPONSE

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

DHAPP staff have been working closely with the ZDF to continue the development of their HIV/AIDS programs. Several technical assistance visits have been made to Zimbabwe by DHAPP staff for discussions with the ZDF on pending projects, and meetings with the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief Country Team for collaboration on the Country Operational Plan.

## OUTCOMES & IMPACT

### **Prevention**

DHAPP has procured a prefabricated Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) Center and is currently working on equipment selections. The VCT Center will be available for active-duty personnel and their families and will have clinical capabilities. Recent collaborations with the Zimbabwe Institute of Public Administration and Management have resulted in trainings for 52 ZDF personnel. The courses covered topics such as HIV/AIDS and pharmaceutical information management, and health information systems management. The ZDF was very pleased with the experience and is eager to receive additional training.



### **Proposed Future Activities**

Future activities will include additional trainings for the ZDF (particularly on clinical aspects of HIV), and continued progress toward opening the VCT with the procurement of lab equipment. The ZDF will hold a military HIV conference during the last week of May 2008. Discussions are being held on the provision of train-the-trainer HIV prevention courses for military spouses and the development of a "Staying Healthy" program for HIV-positive patients.