



**GHANA**

**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 Ghana is 23.4 million people, with an average life expectancy of 60 years. English is the official language of Ghana, which has an estimated literacy rate of 58%, unevenly distributed between men and women. Well-endowed with natural resources, Ghana has roughly twice the per capita output of the poorer countries in West Africa. Gold, timber, and cocoa production are major sources of foreign exchange. The domestic economy continues to revolve around subsistence agriculture, which accounts for 34% of the GDP. The GDP per capita is \$1,500. Sound macroeconomic management along with high prices for gold and cocoa helped sustain GDP growth in 2008.

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

The estimated HIV prevalence rate in the general population of Ghana is 1.9%, with approximately 250,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Identified risk factors include high-risk heterosexual contact with multiple partners, sexual contact with commercial sex workers, and migration (HIV rates are higher in bordering countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire and Togo).

#### **Military Statistics**

The Ghanaian Armed Forces (GAF) is estimated at approximately 12,000 members. The troops are highly mobile, currently engaged in several PKOs in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Liberia. No recent seroprevalence studies have been conducted in the GAF, so the current prevalence rate is unknown. Ghana expends 0.8% of the GDP on the military.

## PROGRAM RESPONSE

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

The Ghanaian Armed Forces AIDS Control Programme and the Public Health Division of the GAF implement the HIV/AIDS program. DHAPP staff provide technical assistance and support to the GAF's program as does the OSC in Accra. DHAPP staff are members of the PEPFAR Ghana Country Support Team and participated in developing the COP for FY09. During FY08, the US Naval Medical Research Unit #3 in Accra began participating in some activities that support the GAF's program.

### **Foreign Military Financing Assistance**

Ghana was awarded Foreign Military Financing funding for the acquisition of laboratory equipment, and supporting reagents and supplies related to the diagnosis and treatment of HIV/AIDS. This award was appropriated for fiscal years 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2008. Funding for 2003 was released for expenditure during FY05, and funding for 2005 was released during FY07. These funds have been used to procure CD4 count and viral load testing equipment, a hematology analyzer along with the supporting diagnostic supplies and reagents, a refrigerator and centrifuge, a much needed laboratory computer, and a biological safety cabinet.

## OUTCOMES & IMPACT

### **Prevention**

The GAF reported continued success in its prevention and care programs during FY08. Through prevention activities, 2,500 troops were reached with comprehensive prevention messages. When troops deploy on PKOs, they are tested for HIV prior to deployment, and peer educators are embedded in the units. Peer educators were trained, but the number was unavailable for reporting purposes.

The GAF has 7 service outlets that provide PMTCT services. Throughout the year, 495 pregnant women used PMTCT services, and 5 women were provided with a complete course of ARV prophylaxis.

### Care

The GAF has 1 service outlet that provided palliative care for troops and family members. At the palliative care outlet, 24 HIV-infected individuals received clinical prophylaxis and/or treatment for TB. Four (4) CT centers were operational for GAF personnel and families. During the year, 2,742 troops and family members were tested for HIV and received their results.

### Treatment

One (1) service outlet provides treatment services to the GAF and family members. During FY08, 112 individuals were newly initiated on ART, and at the end of the reporting period, a total of 404 clients were on ART.

### Proposed Future Activities

Continued comprehensive HIV programming for GAF members and their families was proposed to the PEPFAR Ghana Country Support Team. All proposed activities were included in the FY09 COP. Some of these activities include continued prevention efforts, increased CT services, and the expansion of staff to better assist with the GAF's program.

