



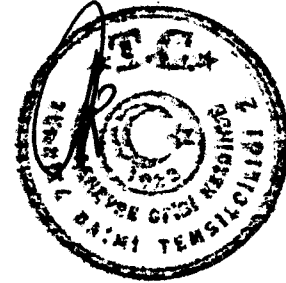
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The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Turkey to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organisations in Switzerland presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and with reference to the latter's Note dated 13 October 2006 has the honour to transmit herewith an Information Note on the steps taken in Turkey to address the urgent HIV-related human rights of vulnerable groups in the context of prevention, care and access to treatment as described in the Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights, in accordance with the Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2005/84.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Turkey avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 22 October 2006

Encl.:1



Office of the High Commissioner
for Human Rights
Palais Wilson
Geneva

OHCHR REGISTRY

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Recipients :... J. Heenan

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Information Note

HIV/AIDS has been included in the list of diseases subject to compulsory notification pursuant to a decision taken by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Turkey in 1985.

In accordance with a circular issued in 1986, screening of all blood samples and blood products against HIV was provided and single-use medical equipment was made compulsory.

In 1987 serological tests began to be conducted for blood/organ/tissue donors, prostitutes and prior to serious operations and the first HIV verification center was set up in the same year. Today 9 verification centers are operating nation-wide.

It is compulsory to perform verification test on blood which has been detected HIV (+) as a result of a screening test. It is fundamental to prevent any violation of individual rights and security of patients in the notification of HIV disease. Therefore, information on patient's identity is reported in assigned codes. The disease cannot be disclosed to third persons or press without the consent of the patient.

In Turkey HIV/AIDS patients have equal rights as other patients, without being subject to discrimination on the basis of gender. Green cards are provided for those HIV/AIDS patients who are not covered by insurance. In Turkey, first step and second step health services within the context of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted epidemics (CYBE) are rendered to public nation-wide. Furthermore, public education and awareness programs continue extensively particularly on 1 December World AIDS Day and throughout the months of December.

In 1996 "National AIDS Commission" (UAK) was set up from 32 national partners from the relevant public institutions, academia and civil society organizations and is chaired by the Ministry of Health. The secretarial services of the Commission is run by a civil society organization called "Turkish Family Planning Association". The 3rd National Strategic AIDS Action Plan adopted by UAK at its session held in June 2006, includes, besides other objectives and strategies, subjects such as transmission of HIV from mother to baby, life skills-based education for youth, substance addiction, increasing access to protective HIV/AIDS health services by groups at risk.

"Sexually-Transmitted Epidemics Monitoring and Evaluation Board" was established in 1996 to closely follow the scientific developments, contribute to devising policies, strategies and activities for necessary measures to be taken, establish fundamentals for internal training of health personnel who render first step health services, develop materials to be used in education and to form the main messages and focus points of public education, for the purposes of preventing and monitoring sexually-transmitted epidemics and providing guidance in this field.

A project named "Key CYBE-HIV Direction-Action" ("Kilit CYBE/HIV Yöneyem") is being carried out by the Ministry of Health. The objective of the project is to determine the existing CYBE/HIV epidemiology in Turkey and to detect the prevalancy of CYBE/HIV among pregnant women transferred to birth and gynecological clinics in the designated

hospitals in the provinces of Ankara, İstanbul, Trabzon and Gaziantep as well as to assess the demographic and behavioural components in vulnerable groups in Ankara, İstanbul and İzmir. The Project will be completed in 2007.

“HIV/AIDS Prevention and Support Program”, which is supported by the Global Fund, aims at increasing access to protective health services of the groups at risk such as sex workers, users of substance injected into vein, homosexual men, convicts in prisons and other penitentiary institutions and HIV/AIDS carriers as well as facilitating such groups and society at large to benefit from voluntary HIV counselling and test services (GDTM). In this framework, the provision of GDT education and the institutionalization of such existing services have been envisaged. The other objectives of the Program includes rendering psychological support to HIV/AIDS carriers, addressing human rights perspective, establishing a legal framework and preparing an action plan on human rights.

Furthermore, within the framework of “Turkey’s Reproduction Health Program” internal training modules have been developed on sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS which are regarded as priority subjects under the program and the training of health care and service providers working at the first step health institutions has begun.