



**Regional Bureau for Arab States**

**HIV/AIDS Regional Programme  
in the Arab States (HARPAS)**



**JAPAN**

**Japan Women In Development Fund  
(JWIDF)**



**United Nations Population Fund  
(UNFPA)**



## **Press Release**

### **Women Rights Institutions & AIDS**



### **Arab Women Creating the Future**

**On October 22-25 2007, Cairo will host a workshop entitled "Arab Women creating the Future", organised by the United Nations Development Programme ( UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Japan Women In Development Fund (JWIDF).**

**Representatives of the Civil Society non- governmental Organizations (CSOs), Human Rights groups, Women Living with HIV, Women Religious Leaders and Governmental Women Rights Agencies will participate in this 3-days workshop.**

**This initiative is a model of the important role, international partnerships play, in response to the challenges nations of the world face - which includes our Arab region.**

**This workshop is the Second of four:**

- **One was in Yemen- for the Horn of Africa and Bab Mendeb subregion**
- **This One in Egypt- for the Mashreq sub-region.**
- **One in Libya- for the Maghreb sub-region.**
- **And one in UAE- for the Gulf area.**
- **In addition to a regional workshop in Djibouti- that covers the whole Arab region, which will look, in particular, the traditional practices and their relationship with the spread of HIV, especially Female Genital Mutilation (FMG).**

### **The main goals of the initiative:**

- 1. To project the HIV response as one of the key human rights and developmental challenges facing the women of the Arab region.**
- 2. To point out that the underlying causes that fuel the HIV epidemic are similar to those contributing to women disempowerment, and that this include different forms of violence against women: Female Genital Mutilation among others**
- 3. To build the capacity of women religious leaders to address harmful traditional practices (including Female Genital Mutilation).**
- 4. Capacity of leading high profile cultural spokespeople including media professionals, women's NGOs leaders, female religious leaders and youth leaders to promote cultural change in response to harmful traditional practices**
- 5. Individual and collective action generated to identify and address barriers women and girls face regarding their own sexual and reproductive health and to provide networks of support.**

**The significance of this breakthrough initiative becomes clearer as we note that, In the Arab region one new HIV infection occurs every 10 minutes .Today, well over half a million people are living with HIV with 68,000 people newly infected with HIV in 2006 alone in this region. The number of AIDS deaths in the region has increased almost six –fold since the early 1990 .If current trends continue, it is projected that countries in the region will face infection rates of 4% by 2015.**

### **Expected Outcomes of this initiative:**

**Breakthrough initiatives are expected to be generated from this major event. These include advocacy plans that limit gender and HIV based stigma and discrimination from the community to policy level including the application of The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in the context of AIDS.**