

Awareness about HIV/AIDS at grassroots level stressed

ISLAMABAD (PTI) — Speakers at a dialogue on HIV/AIDS stressed the need of creating awareness at grassroots level to combat the menace and sought media role in this regard.

The dialogue was organised by Pakistan National Aids Consortium (PNAC) in collaboration with UNAIDS and National Aids Control Programme under title "One Soul Movement Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in Developmental Initiatives," here on Monday.

The speakers in their separate addresses stressed on education and awareness at grass root level to create consciousness among the masses so that they realise HIV/AIDS as extremely dangerous.

They said that there should be mobilisation campaigns not to hate and discriminate the patients of HIV positives but to give them the status having another person in the society.

Minister of State for Information Anisa Zeb Taherkheli in her address said that the government committed to utilise all resources to combat HIV/AIDS, and asked the civil society organisations and all other stakeholders should play their due role and cooperate with the ministry of health.

She said we have recently seen a big disaster that killed thousands of people and left millions of others homeless but the government would see the UN report very seriously in which the UN

said that seven to eight thousands people died annually due to this disease world wide.

Lauding media role in this regard, she said that media is enjoying total freedom for the last 3 years and there is no restriction in giving information due social taboos.

She said the media in their pockets have done a lot in this regard to create awareness amongst the masses against the HIV/AIDS. She, however, asked the NGOs working for this purpose to arrange special training workshops for the mediemen.

Anisa said that Pakistan is now no more low prevalence country, the ministry of health has very active strategies not only to ad-

dress the issue but also to confront with the issue.

Representative of Nation Commission for Human Development (NCHD), Dr Nasser Ashraf said that government launched various programmes in this regard to create awareness grass root level.

He appealed to all the segments of the society to cooperate with the health ministry in this campaign to combat the issue.

Dr Ashraf said that the team of the ministry of health were reaching two million people in a door to door campaign to create awareness against the killer disease.

Dr Aldo Landi of the UNAIDS in his key note address said that more than seven million people have been killed over the world this year due HIV/AIDS.

He said it was much concern to the international organisations working for health that 50 per cent of the killed were women and some two million were children who received the virus through one or another way.

He said that 60 per cent injecting Drug Users (IDUs) were due to unemployment and the government should consider the social issues to address it.

MNA Dania Aziz said that 10 years ago there was not registered a single case of HIV/AIDS and the people even do not know the word of Aids but today 7000 cases have been registered.

She said that there was also lack of information with doctors community and said that there was also need to train medical community of the country.

Other speakers Qadeer Baig, Ms Shukryun Gul, Ms Night Rizvi, Raji Khalid Mehmood, Dr Ahsan Tariq, Aleem Baig, Saleem Azam, and Ms Nosheen Malik also took part in the dialogue.



ISLAMABAD: United Nations Emergency Coordinator Jan J Vandemoortele speaks at "One Soul Movement Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in Developmental Initiatives" on Monday.—Staff photo