

The POST

THE TRUTH, AND NOTHING BUT

and Lahore

Wednesday, December 14, 2005 - Ziq'ad 11, 1426

Pakistan faces HIV growth, warns EC

By Iqbal Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: Head of Operations European Commission (EC) in Pakistan Michael Dale Tuesday warned that Pakistan was on the verge of becoming a high prevalence country in HIV/AIDS context, addressing a seminar on HIV/AIDS, organised by Pakistan National AIDS

Consortium in collaboration with UNAIDS, he said destruction caused by AIDS was like that of destruction caused by atomic bomb. On the occasion he quoted the example of many African countries, which were facing severe economic, cultural and social problems because of the high prevalence of AIDS.

He informed that those countries were

facing a severe shortage of human capital as majority of the people affected with HIV/AIDS was between the ages of 15 to 40. He said if immediate steps were not taken to prevent and control the epidemic, Pakistan could face the same fate.

He discussed the steps taken by European Commission to fight the epidemic globally and in Pakistan. He said that the EC was funding a project titled Tameer for the capacity-building of the organisations working in the field of HIV/AIDS. The project is being implemented by Pakistan National AIDS Consortium. Large number of representatives of the civil society organisations, government agencies and international organisations participated in the seminar. For the first time, the representatives of the marginalised groups like female sex workers, eunuchs, injecting drug users and youth also participated in the seminar and got an opportunity of voicing their opinions and discussing their problems.

The session was titled Community Voices wherein strategies to integrate and incorporate HIV/AIDS in ongoing and future programmes and projects of organisations working in different sectors were also developed through mutual discussion and group work.

Later, Michael Dale, head of Operations European Commission in Pakistan distributed shields among various individuals and representatives of NGOs who were rendering valuable services in the field of AIDS.