

National Response

The overall coordination of Fiji's National HIV response improved during 2009 with efforts to revitalize the National Coordination Mechanism (NCM) which includes broader government and more inclusive civil society. The NCM remains under the management of the Ministry of Health.

Donor support for Fiji and the small Pacific States improved in 2009 with the establishment of a multi-year, regionally managed donor fund for HIV which is managed by a board which includes UNAIDS representing the UN system.

There is good recognition by Fiji's Ministry of Health of the need to strengthen the health system in general as an approach to responding to HIV. A number of capacity strengthening initiatives are underway. The Commission on AIDS in the Pacific reinforced the need for HSS in its report issued in December 2009.

Fiji drafted a new Crimes Decree in 2009 (which became law in early 2010) that decriminalizes homosexuality, but more strongly criminalizes sex work. A draft HIV law was completed in late 2009 which is based on good human rights practice and should become law by mid 2010. The draft attempts to counteract the criminalizing of sex work and reinforces engagement with men who have sex with men (MSM) and other vulnerable communities through decriminalization. The continuing question as to the criminalizing of sex work will remain a significant impediment to achieving Universal Access.

There were advances during 2009 in better linking HIV response initiatives with wider national development and health issues with considerably strengthened prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) initiatives, more widely available voluntary confidential counseling and testing (VCCT), and better connections to Tuberculosis (TB) response initiatives.

Main Challenges

- ▶ Sex work in Fiji remains criminalized through a new Crimes Decree and will create greater impediments to reaching this vulnerable group in the country and to achieve country Universal Access targets, although sodomy laws have been removed.
- ▶ Capacity and financing shortfalls will continue to make scaling up HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STI) response initiatives difficult (Fiji was not successful in its Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria HIV proposal, though it has been successful with both TB and health systems strengthening proposals).