The African AIDS Vaccine Programme

The AAVP is a network of African scientists, working to promote and facilitate HIV vaccine research and evaluation in Africa, through capacity-building and regional and international collaboration.

Vision and goal
The AAVP advocates and supports a coordinated effort to contribute to the global HIV vaccine development effort, ensuring that appropriate vaccines are developed and made accessible in Africa in the shortest possible time.

Background
A group of African scientists, meeting in Nairobi on 14 June 2000, adopted “The Nairobi Declaration: An African Appeal for an AIDS Vaccine”, pledging to use their personal and collective commitment and expertise in the development and implementation of an African Strategy for AIDS Vaccines. With encouragement and support from WHO and UNAIDS, a Steering Committee for the AAVP was nominated to further develop the principles, strategic milestones, activity framework, and to coordinate the initial implementation of the plan of action for the AAVP.

Principles
The AAVP:
- Involves all countries in the region.
- Coordinates efforts with the International Partnership Against AIDS in Africa (IPAA) and with other regional and national HIV programmes.
- Serves as a transparent collaborative process, with equitable participation of multiple partners, from the public and private sector, from countries in the region, and from the international community.
- Is being developed as a long-term and sustainable effort.
- Promotes research with the utmost respect for human rights.
- Aspires to the highest ethical and scientific standards.
- Ensures full community participation.
- Promotes simultaneous development and evaluation of several candidate vaccines, focusing on those deemed more appropriate for the region.
- Contributes to the development of HIV vaccines, consistent with the concept of an international public good.

Strategic milestones
The strategic milestones are defined by the conduct of clinical trials, ensuring that by:
- 2002 appropriate candidate vaccines are available for testing in Africa.
- 2003 at least four phase I/II trials are initiated or completed.
- 2004 at least one phase III (efficacy) is initiated.
- 2007 at least one phase III trial is completed, with concrete plans developed to ensure vaccine access in Africa.
Activity framework
To achieve the above strategic milestones, a number of research/training/capacity-building activities are being implemented in the following five thematic areas:

- **Advocacy and resource mobilization**
  - Partners/donors identification
  - Community mobilization
  - Resource mobilization in support of AAVP goals
  - Dissemination of information

- **Biomedical sciences (laboratory and clinical studies)**
  - Identification and strengthening of laboratory expertise
  - HIV isolation and characterization
  - Immunology methods for vaccine evaluation
  - Appropriate conduct of clinical trials (Good Clinical Practice)

- **Population studies (epidemiology and social behavioural research)**
  - Identification and strengthening of potential sites for vaccine trials
  - Socio/behavioural research protocols to support vaccine trials

- **Ethics, law and human rights**
  - Assess research ethics infrastructures
  - Build capacity for ethics, law and human rights
  - Support the development of national guidelines

- **National strategic planning**
  - Assess vaccine activities in National AIDS Programmes
  - Support development and implementation of National AIDS Vaccine Plans/Strategies
  - Address issues related to future access to HIV vaccines

Structure
- **Steering Committee**: Composed of 8 African scientists responsible for overall technical coordination. Selected members of the Steering Committee are leading and coordinating the work of the five Thematic Working Groups.

- **Thematic Working Groups**: Established for each one of the activity areas. A small group of African scientists (5-8) are responsible for planning, implementation and coordination of thematic activities.

- **Affiliated institutions**: African institutions forming part of the AAVP Network for implementation of activities.

- **Forum**: Broad participation of key partners from Africa and abroad.

- **Sponsors**: Selected key partners providing direct contributions to the Programme.

- **Coordinating Committee**: Selected sponsors and members of the Steering Committee, responsible for overall management.

- **Interim Secretariat**: The WHO-UNAIDS HIV Vaccine Initiative.

MORE INFORMATION can be obtained from:
- WHO-UNAIDS HIV Vaccine Initiative, Geneva, Switzerland (hvi@who.int; fax: +41 (22) 791 4865)
- Dr William Malegapuru Makgoba, Chair of AAVP Steering Committee (malegapuru.makgoba@mrc.ac.za, fax: +27 (21) 938 0200)
- Dr Malaki Owili, Coordinator, AAVP Advocacy and Resource Mobilization Group (dmowili@africaonline.co.ke, fax: +254 (2) 741383)