



Awareness workshop on Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST) in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

In November 2007, a National consensus conference on *“Opioid Substitution Therapy: an Essential Service for Harm Reduction in Afghanistan”* was organized in Kabul by the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Counter Narcotics, together with the Ministry of Justice, NGOs and international experts.

Following this conference, Afghan authorities strongly recommended the introduction of a pilot program in order to produce evidence about the feasibility and the effectiveness of OST in Afghanistan. Subsequently, a first OST protocol (2008) and the National OST policy (2009) were designed and approved by the Ministry of Public Health.

Under the Afghanistan HIV/AIDS Prevention Program (AHAPP), the National AIDS Control Program in coordination with relevant stakeholders started the first methadone treatment program in Afghanistan on the 22nd February 2010 in Médecins du Monde (MdM) prevention, care and treatment centre.

International experience shows that OST is of critical importance if Afghanistan aims to contain the growing concentrated HIV/AIDS epidemic among people who use drugs and improve the current drug treatment services.

In order to increase understanding, support and advocacy for OST among all relevant stakeholders, the Ministry of Public Health proposes to organize a one day awareness workshop on Opioid Substitution Therapy on September 14th 2011 in Kabul.

The specific objectives of this conference are:

1. To update participants on the current situation with regards to HIV/AIDS and drug use in Afghanistan
2. To explain what is OST, to present its objectives, functioning and impact
3. To present the results and the findings of the pilot project after 18 months
4. To discuss with participants the National OST Protocol
5. To establish an inter ministerial taskforce on OST and plan the next steps

The Ministry of Public Health invites technical stakeholders that are involved in the HIV/AIDS, Harm Reduction, Demand Reduction or Mental health response in Afghanistan to participate to this conference.

International experts in the field of HIV/AIDS and drug dependency will be present at the workshop, in particular Dr. Monica Beg from UNODC HIV/AIDS unit (to be confirmed) and Dr. Alex Wodak, Director of the Alcohol and Drug Service at St Vincent's Hospital, Australia.



Agenda



Date: 14th September 2011

Time: 9:00– 16:30

Venue: Ruby Hall, Safi Landmark Hotel

Time	Topic for presentation and discussion	Speakers
9.00 -9.15 am	Registration of participants	
9.15 -9.20 am	Recitation of verses from the Holy Quran	
9.20- 9.25 am	Welcome and introduction of participants	All participants
9.25-9.35 am	Opening remarks	Dr Mashal, DG MoPH
9.35-10.00 am	Drug use in Afghanistan & Drug Demand Reduction Strategy	DDR, MoCN
10.00-10.25 am	HIV/AIDS in Afghanistan & Harm Reduction Strategy	NACP, MoPH
10.25-10.40 am	The UNAIDS/ WHO/ UNODC “Comprehensive Package” for prevention, care and treatment of people who use drugs	UNODC
10.40-11.00 am	Tea break	
11.00 -11.20 am	The National AIDS Control Program response : Afghanistan HIV/AIDS Prevention Program (AHAPP) & Global Fund Round 7 programs	NACP, MoPH
11.20-11.50 am	Introduction to Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST): principles, objectives, functioning & demonstrated impact	Dr Alex Wodak International Expert
11.50-12.15 am	Questions and Answers	All participants
12.15-1.15 pm	Lunch	
1.15-1.45 pm	Impact and lessons learned from the National OST/MMT experience	MDM
1.45-2.30 pm	OST global and regional experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OST in different socio-cultural and religious environments • Incorporating OST in the national programmes (Iran, Nepal, India, Maldives etc) 	Dr Alex Wodak International Expert
2.30-3.00 pm	Questions and Answers	All participants
3.00-3.30 pm	Tea Break	
3.30-4.00 pm	Practical issues related to OST implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the National protocol • Safeguards and good practice 	International Expert/MDM
4.00-4.30 pm	Discussion and establishment of OST taskforce	
4.30 pm	Closing remarks and next steps	