

Hanoi, 24 February 2003

**DIRECTIVE OF THE PRIME MINISTER ON STRENGTHENING
HIV/AIDS PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

For the past 10 years, HIV/AIDS prevention and control has been carried out throughout the country, and has achieved a number of encouraging results: a system of HIV/AIDS prevention and control structures has been established and quickly became operational; a series of interventions in the health sector has been uniformly implemented; and people's awareness of HIV/AIDS epidemic and its prevention and control has been improved. However, the HIV/AIDS epidemic is still increasing and spreading in all provinces and cities; including reported cases from 80% of all districts and over 50% of all communes in the whole country. The Ministry of Health reports that at present there are over 59,000 cases of HIV infection of which over 8,700 have developed full-blown AIDS, and over 4,800 have already died.

The number of HIV/AIDS infected people has increased rapidly mainly due to: an increase in social evils, especially prostitution and drug abuse; a lack of coordination among Ministries and localities in HIV/AIDS prevention and control; inadequate community knowledge about HIV/AIDS, and about people living with HIV/AIDS; a lack of comprehensive management, care, support and treatment towards people living with HIV/AIDS; the communication programmes for HIV prevention and control are not wide-spread nor intensive enough; preventive measures are still weak; and HIV/AIDS related activities at local level are not truly effective.

To overcome the above constraints and to effectively strengthen HIV/AIDS prevention and control, the Prime Minister directs:

1. The Ministry of Culture and Information shall play the lead role in collaborating with other Ministries, the People's Committees in provinces and cities under central authority, socio-political and with mass organizations to strengthen information, education and communication activities with various relevant forms, in order to: strengthen the responsibilities of all local levels of the Party and government in HIV/AIDS prevention and control; generate

community understanding, sympathy for, and non-discrimination against, people living with HIV/AIDS; prevent fear among the population; to encourage families to love and care for their HIV/AIDS infected members; to promote a healthy life style, including practicing and maintaining safe sex and safe injections among the population, especially young people.

2. The Ministry of Public Security shall play the lead role in collaborating with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, and the National Committee on Population, Family Planning and Children to: learn and develop mechanisms to manage HIV/AIDS infected children, sex workers, and drug users who are in training and re-education centers, in prisons, or temporary in jail or in temporary detention centers; and to develop and implement action plans with effective interventions to prevent the transmission of HIV from high-risk groups to the community.
3. The Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs shall play the lead role in collaborating with the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Health, and the National Committee on Population, Family Planning and Children to: learn and develop mechanisms to manage, care and educate HIV/AIDS infected children, sex workers and drug users who are living in the community; provide guidance to local departments of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs on collaboration with local health care institutions to manage, counsel and care for people living with HIV/AIDS in the community, and in health stations established according to the Ordinance on Administrative, Punishments, and Social Protection Centres.
4. The Ministry of Planning and Investment and the Ministry of Finance shall be responsible to: appraise budget proposals; provide adequate budgets in a timely manner for activities of the national HIV/AIDS programme based on the annual state budget approved by the Government; to allocate funds on a priority basis for HIV/AIDS prevention and control, especially in the field of health care and community-based interventions; to mobilize resources and to ensure sound disbursement funds from internal and external resources for HIV/AIDS prevention and control; and to collaborate with other relevant Ministries, and Provincial People's Committees to monitor the management and disbursement of funds allocated for HIV/AIDS related activities.

5. The Ministry of Education and Training shall play the lead role in collaborating with the Ministry of Health and other Ministries to develop appropriate education programmes on HIV/AIDS that will be included in teaching curricula in all types of schools.
6. The Ministry of Health shall be responsible for:
 - a. consolidating and strengthening the system of HIV/AIDS prevention and control structures from central to community levels; and to ensure a single focal point system which can effectively guide and implement HIV/AIDS prevention and control activities.
 - b. strengthening interventions on: harm reduction; and the elimination of HIV/AIDS transmission in the community; promoting the epidemiological surveillance of HIV/AIDS, safe blood transfusions, treatment, and prevention of mother-to-child transmission; prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases; and intensifying the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS transmission through the medical services.
 - c. playing the lead role in developing and implementing activities related to the management, care and support of people living with HIV/AIDS; and to lean and develop a proposal related to the generic production of drugs that will be submitted to the Government for approval.
 - d. playing the lead role in collaborating with the Ministry of Justice and other relevant Ministries in: reviewing and evaluating implementation results and giving recommendations for the amendment of current Ordinances on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control; and strictly complying with national and international commitments made by the Government of Vietnam in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention and control.
7. Ministers, Heads of Ministerial-level agencies, Heads of agencies directly reporting to the Government, Chairmen of People's Committees of provinces and cities under central authority shall collaborate with concerned bodies, socio-political organizations and social organizations to guide and strictly implement this Directive; and shall send regular reports on the implementation of this Directive to the Ministry of Health, which shall prepare consolidated reports for submission to the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister

(signed)

Phan Van Khai

Recipients:

- The Secretariat of the Communist Party of Vietnam;
- The prime Minister, Deputy Prime Ministers;
- Ministries, Ministry-Equivalents, Government-Affiliated Agencies;
- People's Councils and People's Committees of provinces and centrally-administered cities;
- The Central Office and Commissions of the Communist Party of Vietnam;
- The Office of the National Assembly;
- The Office of the State President;
- The People's Supreme Organ of Control;
- The Supreme People's Court;
- Central agencies of mass organizations;
- The Gazette;
- For the Office of the Government: the Minister-Chairman, Deputy Chairpersons, departments and affiliated units; and
- For filing: the Archives and Records Section.