Giving women **POWER** over AIDS



INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP for MICROBICIDES



### HIV is something women can live without

It's a fact of life—and death. Biology and culture combine to put women at greater risk of contracting HIV than men, especially in developing countries. Marriage is no protection; in fact, it can increase a woman's risk. Treatment has been revolutionary but treatment alone is no solution: in countries most affected by HIV disease, health systems are too overwhelmed by the epidemic to care for all who need it.

Prevention is part of the global strategy to combat HIV and AIDS, *but existing HIV prevention strategies aren't enough.* We urgently need new prevention options, especially those that empower women to protect their own health and well-being. This is where microbicides can play a vital role. The **International Partnership for Microbicides** (IPM) is working to speed their development, specifically for use in developing countries, where women are at greatest risk for infection.

IPM is a non-profit organization committed to developing safe and effective microbicides and making them available worldwide. A successful microbicide would give women the power to protect themselves from HIV infection. Vaginal microbicides are products being developed to prevent HIV transmission during sex. Because they are initiated by women, microbicides could offer women a powerful new method to prevent infection.

Developing a microbicide is a complex process that requires extensive research and collaboration with scientists, policymakers and advocates across the globe, as well as participation by thousands of clinical trial volunteers in communities where HIV and AIDS are most prevalent.

IPM is accelerating microbicide development by bringing together private sector technologies and public sector resources. IPM has engaged major pharmaceutical companies in the global microbicide effort, and partners with them to identify the most promising antiretroviral compounds. The microbicides being developed by IPM are based on antiretroviral medicines—the very drugs proven successful at *treating* HIV infection.

> IPM already is working to ensure that once an effective microbicide is developed, it will be available to all women—to women in the world's poorest countries first—as quickly as possible.

## Microbicides: An important part of the solution



Created in 2002. IPM works by collaborating with a global network of partner organizations. It coordinates, helps fund, and directly conducts the different phases of work needed to bring microbicides from initial laboratory testing to final regulatory approval and product distribution.

Cover: Domithile Nyiraminani, photographed at a town hall in Kigali, Rwanda (Geoff Oliver Bugbee)

Left: Staff at IPM's Clinical Trial Material facility in Bethlehem, Pa., sealing vaginal gel applicators for shipment to trial sites (Andrew Loxley, Felt Photography)

Inside Right: Nosiphiwo Zenani and her baby at a clinic in Masiphumelele, South Africa (Geoff Oliver Bugbee)

# MOBILIZING A WORL

## **Partnership Building**

#### Partners

IPM collaborates with more than 75 organizations worldwide to expedite microbicide development, including universities, research institutions, nongovernmental organizations, advocacy groups and major corporations, as well as public health agencies and the national governments of countries hosting clinical studies.

#### Donors

Progress is fueled by financial support from nations across Europe and North America, the European Commission, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the United Nations Population Fund, and the World Bank.

## **Research & Development**

#### Screening

IPM uses the latest scientific techniques to identify compounds that warrant further research and development.

#### Licensing agreements

Royalty-free licensing agreements with pharmaceutical companies allow IPM to develop promising compounds. If the compounds prove successful, these agreements give IPM full rights to distribute the product in resource-poor countries.

#### Market research

Because a microbicide will work only if women use it, IPM is conducting surveys in developing countries to learn which types of microbicide products women prefer.

#### **Delivery mechanisms**

Innovative forms of microbicides, such as long-acting vaginal gels, sustainedrelease intravaginal rings, and vaginal tablets and films, are being developed to give women more options.

# D OF COMMITMENT

## **Clinical Testing**

#### Safety testing

Researchers test the safety of every microbicide candidate to the greatest extent possible before products are evaluated in large-scale studies that will determine product effectiveness.

#### **Efficacy studies**

To conduct these large-scale studies, IPM first studies HIV incidence in various countries to identify areas most suitable for efficacy trials. IPM then develops and strengthens new research centres, trains local staff, improves clinical infrastructure, and engages broader communities hosting the studies.

### Access to Products

#### Selection

IPM prioritizes microbicide candidates based on scientific viability, acceptability among women who will use the products, cost, ease of manufacturing, and other factors that might affect access in developing countries.

#### Infrastructure

New infrastructures may be put in place within existing health systems to ensure that licensed microbicide products can be distributed with as little delay as possible.

#### **Pre-launch** planning

Research in health policy and the social sciences informs decisions that will shape product characteristics, financing, manufacturing and marketing strategies.

## Together, we can make microbicides a reality

When will women in regions greatly affected by poverty and AIDS be able to protect themselves from HIV? There is no easy answer, but by working together we can speed the day when safe, effective, affordable microbicides are available to help millions of women live without HIV.



#### IPM donors include:

#### Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

**Belgian Development Cooperation** 

Canadian International Development Agency

Denmark Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**European Commission** 

France Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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**United Nations Population Fund** 

United States Agency for International Development

World Bank

This list includes all donors who have contributed to IPM since its founding in 2002 through 2008.



#### **The International Partnership for Microbicides** www.ipm-microbicides.org

OUR MISSION: To prevent HIV transmission by accelerating the development and availability of safe and effective microbicides for use by women in developing countries.

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*IPM's 14,475-square-foot CTM facility produces, packages and ships gels and other delivery methods, such as vaginal rings, for use in clinical trials. The CTM is available as a resource for the broader microbicide field.* 

IPM has a dedicated staff of more than 160 in Belgium, South Africa and the United States.