HIV/AIDS: Transport workers take action

International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF)
At the end of 2006 globally around 39.5 (34.1-47.1) million people are living with HIV
There are three reasons to deal HIV in the workplace:

Firstly because HIV/AIDS has a huge impact on the world of work.

Secondly because the workplace is a good place to tackle HIV/AIDS.

Thirdly, because employers and trade unions are leaders in their community and countries.
Impact on workers

How does HIV/AIDS affect workers?

- Loss of income and employee benefits
- Workers’ rights: screening/testing no promotion dismissals
- Fear, stigma and discrimination
Impact on unions

How does HIV/AIDS affect Unions?

- Losing experienced leaders
- Losing general members
- Less interest among potential members
Some groups of workers are particularly more vulnerable to HIV infection because of the nature and conditions of their work. Transport workers, in some situations are such a group. But most of the time this vulnerability is not only controlled by individual's behaviour, it is rather influenced and governed by many social, economic & institutional factors.
AIDS & transport workers

Human mobility has always been a major driving force in epidemics of infectious disease.

UNAIDS 2004 Report
Globalisation, travel, and migration add to risk of increased spread to what we might think as of ‘safe’ countries. The reality is that in our globalised world, there are no ‘safe’ countries.

Former UN Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette
Factors of vulnerability

- Mobility, isolation, absence from home
- Long delays at borders and road blocks
- Harassment (police, border officials etc)
- Work load and stress
- Hostile community
- Daily insecurity
Factors of vulnerability

- Inadequate resting and recreation facilities
- Sexual harassment
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- No access to STI treatment
- Mobility poses problem for getting information
## Impact of HIV/AIDS on transport sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transport sector</th>
<th>Clearly affect the sector</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seafarers</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Railway workers</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Road transport</td>
<td>63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dockers</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<td>Aviation workers</td>
<td>48%</td>
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(Source: ITF survey among affiliates)
Some Alarming Figures

According to national surveillance report in many countries, STI prevalence rate among transport workers are very high.

According to a survey in West Africa, HIV prevalence rate among truck drivers vary from 3% to 32%.

A recent survey along one particular route in South India found that 16 percent of the drivers were HIV positive, while national prevalence rate is less than one percent.
Some Alarming Figures

- Uganda railways has lost 5600 staff to AIDS, a labour turnover rate of over 15%.
- The joint Seafarers initiative of UNICEF and UNAIDS estimate that 22% of seafarers in Mekong region south-east Asia may be infected with HIV.
- Other forms of transport workers are also vulnerable but we have little data on them.
Importance of bridging population group in spread of HIV from at-risk groups to general population (Bangladesh)

- **MSW/HIJRA**: 75.5% married
- **Rickshawpullers**: 30% married
- **FSW**: 69% married
- **MSM**: 45.9% married
- **Truckers**: 51.8% married

- **MSM**: 91%
- **MSW/HIJRA**: 31%*
- **Rickshawpullers**: 18%*
- **FSW**: 33%
- **IDU**: 9%
- **MSM**: 0.6%
- **IDU**: 2%
- **MSM**: 5%
- **IDU**: 9.3% married
- **Truckers**: 69%
Why should we act?

- Our members’ dignity and lives are at stake.
- Unions have long experience in fighting discrimination and stigma, and protecting the rights of the vulnerable, victimised and excluded.
- Unions are uniquely placed to fight the pandemic: the workplace could be a major “entry point” for information, prevention and rights campaigns.
- Unions have large memberships & communication networks, and roots in the community.
ITF strategy to prevent HIV/AIDS among transport workers

- Bringing HIV/AIDS into the union mainstream
- Coordinating and supporting prevention & care programs
- Partnership with relevant stakeholders to implement prevention & support programs
- Lobby and advocacy to establish “HIV as a workplace issue”
Mainstreaming

“HIV” has become an important issue in strategic planning & programs of unions.

Involvement in the development of a workplace policy with others concerned.

Collective bargaining with employers for their involvement in health and HIV programs.

Information and education campaigns for leaders, members and families.

Start considering HIV activities as a tool to organize the unorganised.
Partnership with stakeholders

- Develop partnership with existing HIV prevention and care programs implemented by other organizations.
- Establish health and information centres (drop in centre).
- Promote VCT among the members.
Lobby and advocacy

- Building networks and liaisons with other organizations to establish “HIV as a workplace issue”.
- Use this network for policy advocacy.
- Participate in different seminars, workshops, and meetings to raise issues related to “Transport workers, HIV/AIDS & its impact.”
Campaign with other GUFs

ITF works very closely with the other global unions to build up the profile of “HIV and the Workplace” issue. ITF is an important partner of Global union’s programs against HIV/AIDS.
ITF Initiatives to fight HIV/AIDS

Since the late 80s, the ITF and some of its affiliates have been actively involved in HIV prevention programs for different types of transport workers through educational activities.
Current ITF initiatives

- HIV/AIDS and transport workers project in Africa
- HIV/AIDS and transport workers-South Asia
- Seafarer’s Health Information Program (SHIP)
- Global HIV/AIDS project
- Joint Regional HIV/AIDS project in the Abidjan-Lagos transport Corridor
- REDSO Transport Corridor Initiative
- Resource materials on HIV/AIDS
Aimed at union leadership, negotiators, trainers and shop stewards.

Provides background information on HIV/AIDS and the transport industry.

Main focus: developing the capacity and skills of transport unions to develop workplace policies and collective bargaining strategies on HIV/AIDS.
It is the main publication of the HIV/AIDS project in Africa. Published bi-monthly. It is not just a tool to inform the affiliates but also a media for them to contribute and shape. We are waiting and urging you to contribute as much as you can.
As a part of the Global HIV/AIDS project, the ITF has developed a fortnightly E-bulletin. The objective of this E-bulletin is to circulate AIDS-related news, publications, literature and research to affiliated unions and others working in this field on a regular basis.
This brochure aims to provide an overview of the most important aspects of HIV/AIDS and transport workers. We are currently in the process of updating it to reflect the ITF’s strategy on HIV/AIDS.
Efforts also have been made to ensure that HIV/AIDS issues and articles featuring transport workers and HIV/AIDS appear regularly in the ITF’s overall publications including, “transport international”.
ITF has launched a long-term campaign against HIV/AIDS. The objective of this campaign is to move HIV/AIDS into unions’ core programmes and activities and to encourage unions to lobby to establish HIV as a workplace issue.
The ITF documentary highlight the seriousness of the HIV crisis affecting truckers on the corridor covering Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa. Although it is based in an African context, it focuses more on the global perspective of how the socio-economic factors play a major role in HIV transmission.
The objective of this publication is to help affiliates to develop a trade union perspective within the context of a holistic intervention. It is published in 5 languages.
The ITF has prepared a report based on the experience of Ugandan road and rail transport workers and their unions.
ITF website

ITF web site has got a dedicated section on HIV with all the HIV/AIDS related materials and information.
Moving forward

HIV is an extraordinary global challenges and demand extraordinary global response. We as the important stakeholders really need to intensify our effort and energy to make an effective impact at political, industrial and at work place level.