

Gender and HIV/AIDS: Bringing Women and Men Together
Sunday July 7, 2002 1400h-1600h
2A Fira de Barcelona

Panellist Biographies

Dr. Frank Abamu (PhD)

Focal Point on HIV/AIDS

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Dr. Frank Abamu is WARDA's Focal Point on HIV/AIDS and coordinator for HIV/AIDS-agriculture network in West and Central Africa. He served in a 6 persons Working Group that developed the global initiative on HIV/AIDS, Agriculture and Food security (GIAAFS) being facilitated by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). The broad objectives of the initiative are to increase understanding and communication of the bi-directional links between HIV/AIDS, agriculture, food and nutrition security; to develop and disseminate innovative gender-sensitive policies, technologies and methodologies emanating from such research; to step up efforts in information sharing and capacity development for national and international R&D agencies in the context of the HIV/AIDS challenge, and to ensure that CGIAR centers have best workplace practices in place for its workforce.

Dr. Abamu holds a PhD in Agronomy and serves as Focal Point for HIV/AIDS at WARDA in addition to other research duties. Dr. Abamu's cap on HIV/AIDS involves a range of facilitating functions and setting up infrastructure for the GIAAFS at WARDA. Mitigating HIV/AIDS within the Agriculture R&D work place, mainstreaming and coordinating HIV/AIDS and agriculture research in West & Central Africa. Dr. Abamu works in partnership with national agricultural research institutions, the public and private health sectors, NGO's involved in rural development, and other centers of the CGIAR under the GIAAFS umbrella.

WARDA (The West Africa Rice Development Association) is supported by the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). WARDA's main research center is located at Mbe near Bouake, Cote d'Ivoire.

Carol Amaratunga, PhD

Executive Director

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Carol Amaratunga is the Executive Director of the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, a national health policy institute in Halifax, Canada. The Centre is located at Dalhousie University and the IWK Health Centre, and is funded by Health Canada, federal, provincial agencies and foundations. Carol is an Associate Professor of Research, in the Faculty of Health Professions, Dalhousie University. Prior to joining Dalhousie University in 1996, she worked for many years in Africa, Asia, Caribbean and Latin America on programs affecting the health and

well being of rural and fisher populations. Her academic training is in social anthropology, agricultural extension and economics and adult education. She completed studies at the Universities of Guelph and Toronto, along with field work at the University of Ghana at Legon and the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Carol served with the FAO United Nations as a program manager with the Women's Bureau, Sri Lanka, and was a senior manager for the International Centre for Ocean Development (ICOD). At Dalhousie University she has designed projects in areas pertaining to women's health research, gender and policy, caregiving and unpaid work, women's health and the environment, and HIV/AIDS. Her present goal is to create an International Summer Institute on Gender and HIV/AIDS in partnership with international colleagues and institutes.

Madhu Bala Nath

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Madhu Bala Nath started her career as a women (WID) development officer with the Swedish International Development Authority, (SIDA) in India in the early eighties. During this tenure she spent most of her time working with women at the grass roots in some of the most remote parts of the country understanding their concerns and supporting women's groups with catalytic resources to start addressing some of these needs. In 1986, Madhu moved on to carrying these issues to the policy level working with the United Nations Development Fund for Women, (UNIFEM) as their adviser in India and later on as their adviser for India and Indo China. The focus of the work included improving the visibility of women's work through national census processes, creating spaces for women to negotiate with their political representatives in national electoral processes, and sensitising senior policy makers to gender in development issues. In 1994 Madhu started her work on HIV/AIDS working first with the UNDP Regional project on HIV and development for Asia and the Pacific and then as the UNIFEM/UNAIDS gender and HIV Adviser based in New York until June 2000.

Madhu is currently working as the UNIFEM Regional Adviser, gender and HIV /AIDS, Asia and the Pacific, based in India. Her approach has been to enhance understanding of critical and strategic partners, about the HIV/AIDS epidemic from the gender perspective so that the 'AIDS constituency' is expanded and strengthened and efforts at HIV/AIDS prevention and care become more real and sustainable.

Felicitas Chiganze

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Felicitas Chiganze has extensive experience in community level HIV and AIDS programming in Southern Africa and parts of East Africa, having worked with the Southern African AIDS Training Programme for the last nine years. She has also a strong gender and development background and she spent many years working in the Zimbabwe Ministry of Women's Affairs where she rose to the level of Under Secretary for Women's Affairs. She also spent a couple of years working in CIDA as a Development Officer and had a one year stint with a women's NGO which was involved in a regional research initiative on women and the law in Southern Africa. She therefore has experience working in government, donor agency, NGO and an international organisation.

Felicitas Chiganze holds a BA Degree in Political Science and History plus a Concurrent Diploma in Education, from the University of Botswana; A Post Grad Diploma In Economic Planning and Development from IDEP, Senegal; And a Post Grad Diploma in Women's Law, from the University of Oslo.

Jacqueline Gahagan, PhD

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Jacqueline Gahagan is an Assistant Professor with the School of Health & Human Performance at Dalhousie University where she teaches in the Health Education and Health Promotion program area at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Jacqueline also holds cross appointments in Community Health & Epidemiology, Nursing and Women's Studies at Dalhousie University. Jacqueline is a research associate with the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, involved with the HIV/AIDS portfolio, including HIV/AIDS research projects related to gender, coordinating a gender mainstreaming manual with the Commonwealth Secretariat (UK), and networking with national and international HIV/AIDS research and health policy units. Jacqueline served on Health Canada's National Reference Group on Women and HIV/AIDS. More recently, she has been appointed as a member of the Nova Scotia Advisory Commission on AIDS for a three-year term of office, and is also a member of the Board of Directors of the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia. Jacqueline's current research projects include: "Living with HIV in Nova Scotia", "Unlocking Our Futures: Federally Sentenced Women in Canada and HIV/Hepatitis C Prevention, Care, Treatment and Support", "National Study on HIV Counseling and Testing Among Pregnant Women: Best Practices", and "Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy Among HIV+ Women".

Nancy Spence

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Nancy Spence from Canada, was appointed the Director of the Gender and Youth Affairs Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat in February 1999. As Director of Gender and Youth Affairs, she directs the mandate given to the Commonwealth by Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs in human rights, peace and conflict, political advancement and integration of women into economic change. As Director of Youth Affairs, she manages the portfolio given to the Commonwealth by Ministers of Youth.

Before 1999, Ms. Spence was Director of the South-East Asian Gender Equity Programme based in Singapore and funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). As such, she assisted CIDA's regional efforts to assist women in their efforts to implement the Beijing Platform of Action. Prior to that, from 1991 to 1995, she served as the Deputy Executive Director of the Canada Asian Centre of South East Asia in Singapore, where she developed the Can-Asian Business Women's Network to assist women to play more active roles in regional and international trade. She was also responsible for the design and implementation of a five-year award programme for graduate students to do field work in South-East Asia. With a Masters Degree in Education and an MA in International Affairs, Ms. Spence began her career as a teacher in Tanzania, Kenya and Canada before moving into development work.

Deanna St. Prix-Alexander

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Deanna St. Prix-Alexander was recently named Executive Director of the Women's Health Bureau in Health Canada. Before taking on her responsibilities at Health Canada, she was an Executive Advisor at Treasury Board Secretariat informing simplification of legislation and policies, and proactive models for community/citizen engagement. Ms. St. Prix-Alexander has held progressively senior positions in the federal government, and the private sector and is known for championing diversity and youth. In 1999, she was awarded the *Michelle Comeau Leadership Award*, for a strategic national learning initiative.