



Government of Rajasthan

**Speech of Shri Aimaduddin Ahmad, Health Minister
Rajasthan at the launch of IEC Material by UNICEF
Goodwill Ambassador Smt. Sharmila Tagore**

**dated August 7, 2009
Jaipur**

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Smt. Sharmila Tagore**

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1. I am delighted to attend the launch of the IEC material on HIV and AIDS by the UNICEF Goodwill ambassador Smt. Sharmila Tagore. We are indeed very grateful to Sharmilaji for sparing time and visiting the State to look at various interventions being undertaken by the Rajasthan AIDS control society for prevention and provision of quality services to the infected. Her visit and support is likely to provide the program with considerable impetus to address emerging challenges. The issue of prevention of parent to child transmission and promotion of voluntary blood donation, the subjects of focus in the IEC material are of critical importance to the program. I believe that prevention remains the key strategy towards combating the spread of HIV and AIDS in our society.
2. Rajasthan is the largest State in the Union with vast cultural, social and geographical, diversity. Improving Public health awareness in the State involves sustained efforts and the Rajasthan Aids control society has been making intensive efforts for higher awareness levels. Government is committed to strengthen its services at the PHC, CHC and District hospitals for prevention, treatment and to provide community care for the people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.
3. In order to ensure that care and support is extended to the infected by the family and community, I would urge NGOs and different networks of positive peoples in the State to work with Government to create an environment of care and support. I firmly feel that it is essential that the community and family

act as the essential support system to the infected and affected. The National AIDS Control program reaches out to all 33 districts, 237 blocks and all panchayats to provide them with quality preventive and curative systems. It is important that increased number of expectant mothers access the provision for PPTCT to curtail further transmission of this infection.

4. We have up-scaled the availability of PPTCT across the state and are preparing ourselves to address the growing demand. This is being done by training our nurses and doctors in a phased manner to ensure that more and more people are able to access voluntary testing facilities.

5. Here I would appeal to private sector health care providers in the state to join hands with government to deliver quality services to infected and affected people. As I have said in the beginning the task at hand is huge and government alone cannot ensure or reach all. I consider that knowing one's HIV/AIDS status is the responsibility of every citizen of the State. To conclude, let me thank UNICEF and Smt. Tagore for providing much needed focus to the program.

Jai Hind.