



PRESS RELEASE

IOM and USAID Officially Launch *Ripfumelo* HIV Prevention and Care Project at Migrant Health Seminar

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will officially launch the *Ripfumelo* Project – an HIV prevention and care programme targeting commercial farm workers in three districts in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces of South Africa, on Thursday, 13th August 2009 in Musina.

The IOM/USAID *Ripfumelo* Project is funded by the President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR) to address high levels of unsafe sexual behaviour among farm workers as revealed by IOM's recent in-depth study.

The IOM/USAID *Ripfumelo* Project, a three-year program involving USAID-PEPFAR funding of more than South African Rand 35 million (\$5.1 million*) means "believe" in xiTsonga. It aims to provide sustainable HIV prevention and care services to farm workers by developing a network of stakeholders working specifically on HIV-related issues to reduce the high incidence and impact of AIDS on farm workers, their families and their communities. Partnerships are encouraged among local, provincial, and national government agencies, as well as between public/private entities.

The launch will kick off with a seminar on increasing migrants' access to health services as well as finding solutions to addressing challenges relating to their health, it will be jointly organised and co-hosted by IOM and the Musina Local Municipality, in close collaboration with the Provincial Department of Health and Social Development and Limpopo Office of the Premier.

"The commercial agricultural sector particularly in Musina (where the *Ripfumelo* Project is being rolled out) employs a large number of seasonal workers, many of whom are cross-border migrants. Such a seminar is therefore necessary and presents a good platform to highlight the conditions faced by these and other migrants in terms of realising their right to health," says Dabea Gaboutloeloe, migration health coordinator in charge of the *Ripfumelo* Project at IOM.

"The POWER of partnerships helps people to prevent the threat of HIV and deal with those who are more vulnerable than many other groups. Farm workers face a higher risk of getting and spreading HIV in their communities as factors such as alcohol abuse, that arise from many factors related to poverty and the transitional lifestyle of migrant workers increases," says Mathata Madibane, Project Development Specialist, USAID.

The Musina Local Municipality has experienced an increase in the number of migrants over the past year and this has stretched the already overburdened health system and created a breeding ground for other communicable diseases. This seminar will also showcase some of the activities undertaken by IOM, USAID and other stakeholders in an attempt to alleviate the challenges faced by migrants.



Date: THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2009
Venue: South African Military Grounds - Musina
Time: 08h30 AM

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Editors Notes:

Ripfumelo targets approximately 20 000 seasonal, temporary, and permanent farm workers, including documented and undocumented migrant workers in 120 commercial farms of Hectorspruit/Malelane (Lowveld, Mpumalanga), Makhado/Musina (Vhembe, Limpopo), and Tzaneen (Mopani, Limpopo)

The USAID Ripfumelo Project is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the President's Emergency Plan.

The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for nearly 50 years.