



**PRESS RELEASE**

## **Global Meet on Microbicides Begins**

### **February 24, 2008 New Delhi:**

Inaugurating the 4-day biannual International Microbicides 2008 Conference here in New Delhi, the Chief Guest, Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss, Hon'ble Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, addressed over 1100 delegates comprising researchers, public health workers, communities and advocacy organizations, who have gathered together from across the Globe in New Delhi to discuss and deliberate current research and development of an effective microbicide.

It is for the first time that the meeting is held in the Asian region and for this excellent initiative Dr. Ramadoss while inaugurating congratulated the ICMR for organizing this important international event. He particularly emphasized the need for an active participation and collaboration amongst all stakeholders in achieving the goal of developing and looking forward to a safe, effective, and accessible microbicide for a woman more than a man to deal with behavioral change. The earlier meetings were held at Washington DC in 2000, Antwerp in 2002, London in 2004, and Cape Town in 2006.

Despite the knowledge of successful HIV prevention strategy, HIV continues to spread at an alarming rate especially among women in developing countries. Specifically, there are about 2.5 million cases of HIV in India. The prevalence rate of HIV amongst 15 - 49 years age group is 0.9 % and a mere 0.1 % increase in the HIV prevalence would result in addition of 0.5 millions new cases. The use of current HIV controlled methods such as abstinence, monogamy and condoms – males / females are not always feasible. Therefore, there is an urgent need to have other HIV prevention technologies which are women initiated.

The 4-day meet, with an international scientific advisory committee with eminent medical scientist Dr N.K.Ganguly, formerly Director-General, ICMR as the Chair and national organizing committee with Shri. Naresh Dayal, Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare as Chair, will be discussing at length various issues in four simultaneous tracks – basic science, clinical, social science and community & advocacy under eminent Chairpersons. Specifically, there will be nine plenary sessions, and presentations of 553 Original researches [oral, poster, book] as also cross track sessions, round table discussion sessions including poster sessions and exhibitions. A total of 454 applicants [Africa: 317; Asia including China: 80; Europe 19; and Americas 38] were successful in getting the scholarship award.

Microbicides refers to a range of different products that share one common characteristic: the ability to prevent the sexual transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections when applied topically. A variety of microbicides are being researched which could be delivered in many forms: gels, creams, suppositories, films, sponge or ring. Microbicides are currently under research & development.

The inauguration function was followed by a classical cultural evening by *ADITI MANGALDAS DANCE COMPANY- THE DRISHTIKON DANCE FOUNDATION* at Convention Centre, Hotel Ashok, Chanakayapuri, New Delhi