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Legislation on HIV&AIDS

Proposed bill awaits Law Division's nod since 2005

FOZIA AZAM

ISLAMABAD-Anti-HIV&AIDS efforts by the Ministry of Health seem to be wasted since despite lapse of more than two years the first-ever legislation "HIV&AIDS Prevention and Treatment Bill" lays pending with the law division for vetting process.

In 2005 National AIDS Control Programme in consultation with stakeholders took initiative and prepared the draft bill aimed at prevention of HIV spread among general population, particularly in vulnerable groups and for providing care, support and treatment of persons living with HIV and AIDS.

As per legal procedure after finalization of the draft it was submitted before law division for vetting process. Due to sheer negligence on part of both National AIDS Control Programme and

Health Ministry the file is rusting as they have not paid any attention to get it back and move it before Parliament for approval.

"We could not manage to pursue the issue as we were waiting for final approval of the PC-1 for the next five years of National AIDS Control Programme, as it has to get final approval by the Executive Committee of National Economic Council with a cost Rs 9.9 billion" said an official of the ministry.

"We have planned to follow the propped bill after getting final nod of the awaited PC-1 and would try to get it approved by the parliament as soon as possible" he continued.

A copy of the proposed bill available with TheNation suggests that there shall be no discrimination against people suffering from HIV and AIDS at any level. As per rules set by the said

Bill no person will be discriminated on the basis of his or her HIV status in relation to any activity in private or public sectors.

One of the key objectives of the bill is to protect vulnerable populations against stigma and discrimination on the basis of their HIV status and to provide them treatment facilities. The bill proposed establishing of National and Provincial AIDS commission and it holds federal government responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the bill.

The commission would be empowered to formulate and implement a National HIV and AIDS Policy, which be reviewed, and amended if necessary, every three years after consultation. One of the salient features of the bill is making mandatory screening of blood and blood related products, including organs and tissues for donation for HIV.