Geneva, 3 February 2012--The World Health Organization (WHO) will later this month issue further guidance on the reported link between hormonal contraceptives such as the pill, injectables, implants and HIV.

On 31 January and 1 February, WHO convened a technical consultation *WHO and Partners Stakeholders' Meeting on Hormonal Contraception and HIV Infection: A review of the evidence and implications for service delivery and priority research*
, made up of 53 experts from 20 countries to review the body of published evidence on the use of hormonal contraceptives and HIV acquisition, progression, and transmission. The review was prompted by new findings in 2011 that implied a possible increase in HIV infection among women at risk of HIV who use hormonal contraception, or increased transmission to an un-infected partner when a woman is living with HIV and using hormonal contraceptives.

The outcomes of this meeting will now be assessed by the WHO Guidelines Review Committee (GRC) - the body that oversees the production of WHO public health guidelines for countries. The Committee will meet on 15 February and announce its recommendations the following day.

However, WHO guidelines clearly state, and call on health service providers to remind their patients, that neither hormonal contraceptives nor intrauterine devices (IUDs) offer protection against HIV or other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Condoms are the mainstay of dual protection against both unwanted pregnancy and STIs including HIV.

As outlined in WHO's recent guidance in 2009, based on the best evidence available at that time, The *Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use, 4th Edition 2009* (MEC) says that women at high risk of HIV infection and those who are living with HIV can safely use hormonal methods.