

Headline	Xi shows his caring side		
MediaTitle	Sunday Star		
Date	02 Dec 2012	Color	Black/white
Section	World	Circulation	320,964
Page No	38	Readership	1,072,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	413 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 9,114
Frequency	Weekly	PR Value	RM 27,343



Xi shows his caring side

Veep gives support to AIDS patients

BEIJING: Vice-President Xi Jinping is urging society to abandon discrimination against certain groups of people and "to light their life with love".

Xi, also general-secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, visited a group of HIV/AIDS patients at a community clinic on the eve of World AIDS Day.

He shook hands with HIV carriers and learnt about the progress in drug treatment and counselling service they have received.

"HIV/AIDS is not terrible in itself, but what is really dreadful is the ignorance on HIV/AIDS and the prejudice against AIDS patients," said Xi.

"All HIV carriers and AIDS patients are our brothers and sisters, and the whole society should light their life with love," he said.

Upon arriving at the clinic in Puhuangyu Community in south Beijing, Xi put on a red ribbon pin, an emblem popular around the world for symbolising solidarity with AIDS-affected people.

He was briefed on the work of the clinic to roll out anti-HIV medicine among people with high-risk behaviour.

In a counselling service room, Xi met an HIV carrier surnamed Sun, who is also a volunteer

of a peer education programme to give face-to-face counselling to other HIV-positive people.

Xi praised Sun for his optimistic manner and encouraged him to do as much as possible in contribution to anti-AIDS efforts.

It is unfortunate to be infected, but with care from the society and medical treatment, it is possible for many patients to recover, Xi told Sun.

Xi also stressed the unique role of counselling services in combating HIV/AIDS, such as helping infected people allay fears and the sense of inferiority to be more confident.

During the visit, Xi joined a group of disease-control workers and volunteers who were taking part in training on how to teach HIV-prevention knowledge among those who are mostly vulnerable to the infection.

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Personal visit: Xi shaking hands with an HIV-positive person at the community clinic. — Xinhua

Xi said that although effective disease-control measures have been implemented in China, "we must take note that the situation for preventing and controlling HIV/AIDS is still grave, prejudice against HIV-affected people remains serious, and there is a lot to do in the field of HIV/AIDS prevention and control."

He called for an earnest implementation of the country's 2011-2015 plan for HIV/AIDS prevention and control, which requires the participation of the entire society, an all-out investment and a comprehensive prevention.

"The prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS should cover all the affected people without differentiation to ensure that the care from the Party, government and the whole society can reach them," he stressed.

China, with a population of over 1.3 billion, has an estimated number of 780,000 people living with HIV/AIDS.

The number of reported cases of HIV/AIDS stood at 492,191 by the end of October, including 68,802 new cases this year, according to the Ministry of Health. — Xinhua