

WOMEN DEMAND ACTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY NOW!

Response from Women's Groups to the negotiations on the Political Declaration for the UNGASS Review, 2006

We, women's groups (including women living with and affected by HIV/AIDS and young women) monitoring the UNGASS Review Process, wish to express our concerns about the negotiations around the Political Declaration that is to emerge from this High Level Meeting. We strongly support and commend the role of negotiators from the Rio Group, Canada, EU, Norway, Switzerland and Nigeria in striving to retain and strengthen the commitments to women's rights made in 2001 by demanding clear targets and accountability. *However, ...*

We are outraged that critical women's rights issues that are central to the goal of halting this pandemic--such as the right to health and the right to live free of sexual coercion and violence, universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and education, and protection of sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls--are still up for negotiation. **We are appalled** that governments are still reluctant to commit to targets and resources and to take responsibility to comprehensively protect and promote women's rights, the lack of which fuels the pandemic. Governments are backtracking on commitments they are party to including the Declaration on HIV/AIDS adopted in 2001, and related international and regional human rights agreements and conventions.

We demand that governments urgently commit to; implement, resource and monitor the following actions:

- Intensify efforts to increase the capacity of women and adolescent girls to protect themselves from the risk of HIV-infection including by creating and committing adequate resources to an enabling environment for the empowerment of women;
- Protect and promote women's and girls' full enjoyment of all human rights including their rights to have control and decide freely on all matters related to their sexuality, including their sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, ensuring access to comprehensive health care and health services, including male and female condoms; and invest in the fast-track development of female controlled prevention methods and microbicides.
- Ensure full access to comprehensive information and education, including sexuality education
- Strengthen women's economic independence; and reiterate the importance of the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality.
- Commit to strengthening legal, policy, administrative and other measures for the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, including harmful traditional practices, abuse, early and forced marriage, rape, including marital rape and other forms of sexual violence against women is addressed as an integral part of the national and international HIV/AIDS response; and providing post-exposure prophylaxis to women survivors of violence.

Governments must fully guarantee that HIV prevention, treatment, care and services are provided to all vulnerable populations, including women and girls (especially in situations of conflicts and emergencies), active injecting drug users, children, men who have sex with men, transgenders, youth, sex workers, prisoners and migrant populations; and recognize and address the ways in which the pandemic is racialized as well as gendered across the globe.

Finally, we demand governments listen and respond to civil society, especially women's groups and women living with HIV/AIDS, in setting of goals and priorities, the determination of funding streams and program guidance, design, planning, implementation and evaluation of HIV/AIDS policies and programs.

Women's rights are not negotiable! Don't miss another opportunity! The time to act is NOW!

June 1, 2006

Acting Organizations

Aahung, Actionaid International, Association for Women 's Rights in Development (AWID), Comision Nacional de Seguimiento, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer. (FEIM), Gender and Education Office of International Council for Adult Education (GEO-ICAE), International Women's Health Caucus (IWHC), International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC), International Working Group on Sexuality and Social Policy, Latin American Council of NGOs with AIDS Services (LACCASO), Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL), Mujer y Salud en Uruguay (MYSU), Red latinoamericana de Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir, Red Intra-PosMuros DDHH Internacional, Secretaria Grupo de Mujeres del Argentina, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), Women for Women's Human Rights- New Ways, Youth Coalition