June 18, 2013

AIDS 2014 Conference Coordinating Committee
c/o International AIDS Society HQ
Avenue de France 23
CH-1202 Geneva
Switzerland

Dear Françoise Barré-Sinoussi and Sharon Lewin:

A new report released on June 4th by a coalition of global advocacy organizations shows that the International AIDS Conference (IAC) program continues to lack meaningful coverage of HIV-related issues concerning men who have sex with men (MSM), transgender people, people who inject drugs (PWID), and sex workers. Featuring a systematic quantitative audit and qualitative analysis of the full AIDS 2012 abstract-driven program, the report’s findings include:

- Only 17% of all abstracts at AIDS 2012 were exclusively focused on one of the four key populations, reflecting little improvement over key population coverage at AIDS 2010, which was 16.8%.

- More abstracts on key populations focused on individual risk factors (40%) than any other topic, exceeding structural factors (26%); primary prevention (19%); testing, care, and treatment (15%); and surveillance (10%).

- Only 29% of abstracts on key populations focused on describing interventions, while 71% described vulnerabilities without offering detailed solutions.

- Nearly two-thirds of all abstracts on key populations were focused in 10 countries alone.

These populations are at greater risk for HIV than the general population in nearly every country around the world, and mounting evidence argues that addressing HIV among key populations is central to ending the global AIDS crisis. This kind of coverage of key populations at the world’s premier AIDS conference is unacceptable.

The IAC represents a unique and powerful opportunity to impact the global AIDS epidemic, offering unparalleled potential to shape the industry’s discourse, funding priorities, and locus of scientific inquiry. By updating the IAC’s processes to increasing meaningful engagement with and coverage of key populations, the IAC will not only support the development of more effective strategies to address the needs of key populations, it will bring the global AIDS response closer to developing the comprehensive strategies we need to end this epidemic.
We, the undersigned organizations, call on the Conference Coordinating Committee to take the following measures to: A) increase the number and quality of abstracts on key populations that are submitted to the conference; and B) ensure that quality abstracts submitted on key populations are not rejected from the conference. In so doing, the IAS can enhance the relevance of the IAC to key populations, leveraging its unique position as a convener and platform for knowledge exchange to strengthen the global response to the epidemic among MSM, transgender people, PWID, and sex workers.

1. **Community Consultations**
   Conduct community consultations with each key population to determine program topics that would be most valuable to community members, advocates, and service providers working with key populations in the lead-up to AIDS 2014.

2. **Targeted Call for Abstracts**
   Use the results from the community consultations to inform the conference’s call for abstracts, explicitly stating that topics identified through community consultations will be prioritized for acceptance.

3. **Match Abstracts with Reviewers Based on Expertise**
   Develop a system for matching abstracts on key populations with reviewers who have expertise on the population and related issues in question; ensure reviewers have a strong understanding of the nature and value of community-based research and programming.

4. **Advocate for Better Funding and Support for Research on Key Populations**
   As a leader in the field, the IAC and the International AIDS Society (IAS) that organizes it are well positioned to advocate with large funders and research institutions for more appropriate funding and support for research on key populations that responds to community needs.

5. **Increase Conference Accessibility for Key Populations**
   a. Choose a location that is accessible to MSM, transgender people, PWID, sex workers, and people living with HIV to encourage more balanced program content and conference deliberations.
   b. Create a scholarship fund to support more robust attendance of key population leaders, helping to ensure they gain the full range of benefits of participation and that the voices of key populations are represented at influential dialogues on site.

The coalition of organizations responsible for this report stands ready to engage with the organizers of the IAC to support the implementation of these recommendations.

The full list of signatories and country affiliations is listed below.

- ABC-123, Kosovo
- ACON Health, Australia
- ACT (AIDS Committee of Toronto), Canada
- Action pour la Lutte Contre l'Ignorance du Sida (ALCIS), Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Advocates for Youth, United States of America
- AFAO-Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations, Australia
- African American Office of Gay Concerns, United States of America
- African Men for Sexual Health and Rights (AMSHeR), South Africa
- African Sex Workers Alliance (ASWA), South Africa
- AFRIQUE ARC-EN-CIEL, Togo
- AHUSADEC RD Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo
- AIDS Community Research Initiative of America (ACRIA), United States of America
- Aids Fonds, Netherlands
- AIDS Foundation of Chicago, United States of America
- AIDS Project Los Angeles, United States of America
- AIDS Project of the East Bay, United States of America
- Aids Resource Center, Ethiopia
- Alafia (Peace), United States of America
- ALEGa Cantabria, Spain
- All-Ukrainian Public Organization "Gay-Alliance Ukraine", Ukraine
- AMA National Network Of sex Workers, Myanmar
- Amigos Contra el Sida - Friends Against AIDS, Mexico
- Anna Forbes, United States of America
- APCOM (Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health), Thailand
- APNSW - Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers, Thailand
- APOYO POSITIVO, Spain
- APROASE A.C., Mexico
- APTN - Asia Pacific Network of Transgenders, India
- Asociacion Civil Impacta, Peru
- Asociacion Civil CAMBIO Y ACCION, Peru
- Asociacion LGBTI Algarabia, Spain
- Asocijacija DUGA, Serbia
- Association La Brique, Togo
Associaton "Stav +" Subotica-Association to Help and Support PLHIV, Serbia
Astitva - An Organisation for the Support and Development of Sexual Minorities, India
Australian Research Centre in Sex Health and Society, Australia
Bandhu Social Welfare Society, Bangladesh
Bar Hostess Emowerment and Support Program, Kenya
Batula Youth Movement, Nigeria
Best Practices Policy Project, United States of America
Blue Diamond Society, Nepal
Canadian Treatment Action Council, Canada
Carusel, Romania
CENSIDA (NAP Mexico), Mexico
Center for Prevention and Social Education PARASOL, Poland
Center of Excellence for Transgender Health, United States of America
Centre for Popular Education and Human Rights, Ghana, Ghana
CHAINE D'UNION, Cameroon
Champions for Change Guyana, Guyana
Citizen News Service - CNS, India
City University of New York-KCC, United States of America
Ciudadaniaxs: Cultural Activism and Human Rights, Peru
COLECTIVO DE HOMBRES EN ACCION COMUNITARIA A.C, Mexico
Colectivo Feminista Panteras Rosas, Nicaragua
Comision Anti-Sida de La Rioja, Spain
Communication for Social Change, Ghana
Community Network for Empowerment (CoNE), India
Community-Based Research Centre for Gay Men’s Health, Canada
CTAC, Canada
Cycle for Freedom Inc., United States of America
Czech AIDS Help Society, Czech Republic
David Ostrow & Associates, United States of America
Desiree Alliance, United States of America
Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation, South Africa
Dette Resources Foundation, Zambia
Dialogai, Switzerland
Different Avenues, United States of America
DIVERLEX DIVERSIDAD E IGUALDAD A TRAVES DE LA LEY (ACTING TRANS SECRETARY OF ILGA), Venezuela
Diversity and Solidarity Trust, Sri Lanka
Dublin AIDS Alliance, Ireland
EHPV, Estonia
Epicentro, Peru
Equal Opportunities, Tajikistan
Espolea, Mexico
Estonian Network PLWHIV, Estonia
European AIDS Treatment group, Belgium
EVOLVE, Cameroon
Federation of Sexual and Gender Minorities Nepal (FSGMN), Nepal
Foundation Esther Boucicault Stanislas, Haiti
Foundation for Human Rights and Community Development, Tanzania
Friends of Rainka, Zambia
Friends of RAINKA - MEDICAL CONSULTANCY, Zambia
FUNDACION SIN ANIMO DE LUCRO VIHDA, Colombia
Gais Positius, Spain
Gala Initiative Uganda, Uganda
GALZ, Zimbabwe
GAT, Portugal
Gay Health Network, Ireland
Gay Men’s Health, United Kingdom
Gay Men’s Health Crisis, United States of America
Gay/Bi/Queer Trans Men’s Working Group Ontario Gay Men’s Sexual Health Alliance, Canada
GENDERDOC-M, Moldova
German Aids-Service Organisation, Germany
Global Action for Trans* Equality (GATE), Argentina
Global Inklusi untuk Perlindungan AIDS (GIPA) - Advocacy Human Rights & Justice for AIDS, Indonesia
Global Justice Institute, United States of America
Global Justice Institute - MCC, United States of America
Graham Neilsen, Australia
Grupo de Trabajo sobre Tratamientos del VIH (gTt-VIH), Spain
Grupo EsteAmor, Dominican Republic
GYCA, United States of America
Harm Reduction Coalition, United States of America
Health Consumers Alliance of South Australia, Australia
Helem, Lebanon
Heroes Project (India), India
HIV Prevention Justice Alliance (HIV PJA), United States of America
HIV Young Leaders Fund, Netherlands
HOPS-Healthy Options Project Skopje, Macedonia
Humanity First Cameroon, Cameroon
Hydra, Germany
India HIV/AIDS Alliance, India
Indian Harm Reduction Network (IHRN), India
Initiative for Improved Male Health, Nigeria
Initiative for Improved Male Health IMH-Initiative, Nigeria
International AIDS Empowerment, United States of America
International Centre for Advocacy on Rights to Health (ICARH), Nigeria
International HIV Research Group, Australia
International HIV/AIDS Alliance, United Kingdom
International Rectal Microbicide Advocates, United States of America
IRMA Nigeria, Nigeria
Positively Alive, South Africa
Preventive Care International, Uganda
PRIDE In Action, Jamaica
Project SAFE, United States of America
Projecte dels NOMS_Hispanosida, Spain
PRUDENCE, Senegal
Public Policy Team Metropolitan Community Churches, United States of America
Qssociation La Brique, Togo
Quan Consulting, Australia
Rainbow Ethiopia HIV and Social Support Services, United States of America
Rainbow Women Network, Fiji
Red Umbrella Fund, Netherlands
Rock of Hope Swaziland, Swaziland
Rose Alliance, Sweden
RP Lafreniere Aids Foundation-Uganda, Canada
Sahayogi Samaj, Nepal
SANGRAM, India
Sensoa, Belgium
Sero Project, United States of America
Sex Worker Open University, United Kingdom
Sex Workers Action New York (SWANK), United States of America
Sex Workers Outreach Project - Chicago, United States of America
Sex Workers Outreach Project - NYC, United States of America
SHIP Foundation, Philippines
SIBALT Center for Health and Social Support, Russia
Sigma Research London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom
SKUC, Slovenia
South Jersey AIDS Alliance, United States of America
Spectrum Uganda Initiatives, Inc, Uganda
Srikandi Sejati Foundation, Indonesia
STAR-STAR, Macedonia
Stop Sida, Spain
Street Works, United States of America
SWOP NSW, Australia
SWOP-PHILLY, United States of America
Syndicat du Travail Sexuel (STRASS), France
Syrian Society for HIV-AIDS and Related Diseases Struggle, Syria
TAMPEP-Germany, Germany
Tanzania Sisi Kwa Sisi Foundation, Tanzania
The Global Network of People Living with HIV North America (GNP+NA), United States of America
The Initiative for Equal Rights, Nigeria
THP Capacity Advisors, United States of America
Tonga Leitis’ Association, Tonga
Transgender Law Center, United States of America
Transgender Limburg, Netherlands
Transgender Victoria, Australia
Uasin Gishu Students Association, Kenya
University of Amsterdam, Netherlands
Urgent Action Fund for Women’s Human Rights, United States of America
VAMP, India
Walter Leitner International Human Rights Clinic, United States of America
WEZESHA, Tanzania
Women With A Vision Inc., United States of America
Woodhall Sexual Freedom Alliance, United States of America
Working Men Project, United Kingdom
World Health Organization, Switzerland
Youth Watch, Uganda

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