

June 23, 2008

H.E. Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary-General  
H.E. Srgjan Kerim, President, United Nations General Assembly  
H.E. Ambassador Léo Mérorès, President of ECOSOC  
Selma Ashipala-Musavyi, Chair, Commission on Narcotic Drugs  
Hamid Ghodse, President, International Narcotics Control Board  
Peter Piot, Executive Director, UNAIDS  
Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Excellencies:

As HIV advocates and health professionals, we are concerned about the impact of contradictions between HIV commitments and drug policies. We will not achieve universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment without protecting the human rights of people who use drugs.

As organizations concerned with ensuring an effective global response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic, we wish to highlight our particular concerns regarding the United Nations-sponsored International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, June 26. Governments often use this day to highlight repressive drug control efforts by publicizing executions, arrests, and drug seizures. For drug users, every day brings the expectation of execution, arrest, and imprisonment.

All Member States of the United Nations have committed to bolstering HIV prevention by reducing the harms related to injection drug use. We call on governments to honor these commitments by giving greater emphasis to proven, effective strategies to combat HIV among people who use drugs.

Outside of Africa, 30% of all new HIV infections occur among drug injectors; the fastest spreading epidemics are currently among those who inject drugs. HIV and AIDS programs cannot be effective if harsh drug policies make people afraid to use them.

The International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking highlights the extremes of the traditional enforcement-based approach to drug problems. As we transition from the 2008 High Level Meeting on AIDS to the 2009 High Level Meeting on drugs we need to take a new approach to drug policy – one that recognizes the importance of protection for people who use drugs. The current split in the United Nations between addressing drug use through a public health approach versus a law-enforcement approach causes confusion. It is critical that UN systems speak as one.

For this June 26 and beyond, we call on governments and the UN system to recognize that good AIDS policy requires sound drug policy – measures that address the drugs problem without impeding access to lifesaving HIV services.

cc: Civil Society Task Force, 2008 High Level Meeting on AIDS

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## June 26 Sign-on endorsements

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Country</u>
<b>ASIA</b>		
Sohaila Yarzad	AAWC	AFGHANISTAN
Faiz Ullah	Association for Youth and Cultural Organization	BANGLADESH
Dy Many	Cambodian Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (CCW)	CAMBODIA
Kem Ley	HIV/AIDS Coordinating Committee (HACC)	CAMBODIA
Oum Sopheap	Khmer HIV/AIDS NGO Alliance	CAMBODIA
Chang Kun	China AIDS Group	CHINA
Dr. Molly Charles	Consultant	INDIA
Loon Gangte	Delhi Network of Positive People (DNP+)	INDIA
Amar Singh Sidhu	EMPOWER	INDIA
Bhawani Shanker Kusum	GGs Institute of Information, Communication Technology India	INDIA
Alexander Matheou	Gram Bharati Samiti (GBS) & Amber Bhawan	INDIA
Sonal Mehta	India HIV/AIDS Alliance	INDIA
Gauri Shankar Rajhans	India HIV/AIDS Alliance	INDIA
Dr M. S. Menon	Indian Institute of Rural Reconstruction and Social Change	INDIA
Vikram Laishram	Kripa Foundation	INDIA
Haobam Nanao	Manipur Intravenous League	INDIA
Y.Shasikumar Singh	Manipur Network of Positive People	INDIA
Subha Raghavan	SASO - Social Awareness Service Organisation	INDIA
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Reena Lama	Malaysian AIDS Council	MALAYSIA
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Prem Kumar Limbu	Nepal Plus	NEPAL
Roshan Sapkota	Positive Voice	NEPAL
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Suyash Rajbhandari	Recovering Nepal	NEPAL
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Pascal Tanguay	Timi Hami Ani Hamro Nepal	NEPAL
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	Asian Harm Reduction Network	THAILAND
	Harm Reduction Consultant	THAILAND
	Thai AIDS Treatment Action Group (TTAG)	THAILAND
	PSI Asia	

**CENTRAL/EASTERN EUROPE AND  
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Marina Chavchanidze	Alternative Georgia	GEORGIA
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	WPO "Safo"	TAJIKISTAN
	Young Generation of Tajikistan	TAJIKISTAN
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