

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

June 26 Sign-on endorsements

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Country</u>
ASIA		
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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	Indian Institute of Rural Reconstruction and Social Change	INDIA
Dr M. S. Menon	Kripa Foundation	INDIA
Vikram Laishram	Manipur Intravenous League	INDIA
Haobam Nanao	Manipur Network of Positive People	INDIA
Y.Shasikumar Singh	SASO - Social Awareness Service Organisation	INDIA
Subha Raghavan	Solidarity and Action Against The HIV Infection in India (SAATHII)	INDIA
Maryam Wong Abdullah	ACC (Alternative Community Center)	MALAYSIA
Dr. Hla Htay	Burnet Institute	MALAYSIA
Adeeba Kamarulzaman	Malaysian AIDS Council	MALAYSIA
Rusli Ismail	Malaysian AIDS Council	MALAYSIA
Reena Lama	Friends Affected & Infected Together in Hand - FAITH	NEPAL
Prem Pan	Hepa Foundation	NEPAL
Salim Akhtar	Nepal HIV/AIDS Alliance (NEHA)	NEPAL
Kiran Basnet	Nepal Plus	NEPAL
Prem Kumar Limbu	Positive Voice	NEPAL
Roshan Sapkota	Recovering Nepal	NEPAL
Binod Aryal	Recovering Nepal	NEPAL
Suyash Rajbhandari	RIC/ROSE Co-operation Nepal [Reform Intoxicate Center and Rose Co-Operation Nepal]	NEPAL
Irfan Peter	The Recovering Group	NEPAL
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Fiona Oakes	Sadaqat Clinic	PAKISTAN
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	Harm Reduction Consultant	THAILAND
	Thai AIDS Treatment Action Group (TTAG)	THAILAND
	PSI Asia	

CENTRAL/EASTERN EUROPE AND**CENTRAL ASIA**

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	AIDS Action Council	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
	AIDS Foundation of Chicago	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
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	Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP)	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
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	New Zealand AIDS Foundation	NEW ZEALAND
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