



Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNAIDS

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**59th Session of the
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**Agenda item 14:
Specific Groups and Individuals**

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Chairperson, distinguished delegates,

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is the leading advocate for global action on HIV/AIDS. It brings together eight UN agencies in a common effort to fight the epidemic: the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labor Organization (ILO) the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization and the World Bank.

UNAIDS also works with a broad range of partners – governmental and NGO, business, scientific and lay – to share knowledge, skills, and best practice across boundaries.

Since UNAIDS' inception, human rights has been a crosscutting theme in its policies, programmes and activities. A rights based approach is central to effective prevention and care programmes and mitigating impact of the epidemic.

The specific nature of the UNAIDS Secretariat's work, in partnership with its cosponsors and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) have included standard setting in the area of human rights and HIV/AIDS, conducting relevant research, training, providing technical support in developing supportive national policy and legal frameworks; strengthening national and regional civil society networks on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights; mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in Treaty monitoring mechanisms and production of best practice materials.

Standard Setting: HIV/AIDS and Human Rights

UNAIDS in collaboration with the OHCHR and other partners has developed guidelines advancing human rights in the context of HIV/AIDS.

In February 1998, UNAIDS and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) jointly published the *International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights*. These guidelines set the standards for upholding HIV/AIDS related human rights at the national, regional, and international levels. These Guidelines are a useful resource in the necessary scaling up of the response to HIV/AIDS by all actors concerned – governments and non-governmental organizations, the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations.

Through UNAIDS funding and technical support, the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO) published the *NGO Summary and Advocates Guide* as a more user-friendly form of the *International Guidelines* to enhance the document's accessibility. The *NGO Summary and Advocates Guide* has been distributed widely at national, regional, and international levels. It has been translated into Spanish and French.

In July 2002, the OHCHR and UNAIDS convened a group of experts to update the *International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights*. The Revised Guideline 6

on “Access to prevention, treatment, care and support” provides an up-to-date policy guidance that is based on current scientific progress, international law and best practice at country level.

Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in Human Rights Mechanisms

UNAIDS in collaboration with the OHCHR works with the United Nations human rights machinery to strengthen understanding, monitoring, and enforcement of HIV/AIDS related human rights.

HIV/AIDS-related human rights information is provided to various committees that monitor human rights treaties and has been integrated in the treaty body’s work, particularly in reporting guidelines, General Comments, Thematic days and Concluding Observations.

In an effort to help make the international human rights monitoring process more accessible to HIV/AIDS activists, UNAIDS published the *Guide to the UN Human Rights Machinery for AIDS service organizations, people living with HIV/AIDS and others working in the area of HIV/AIDS and human.*

Conducting Research in HIV/AIDS related issues

UNAIDS has conducted research to better understand the relationship between HIV/AIDS and human rights, especially HIV/AIDS related stigma and discrimination.

Research has been conducted on the forms, contexts, and determinants of stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS in Uganda and India. This research was undertaken by the AIDS Support Organization in Uganda and by the TATA Institute of Social Sciences in India. The final report- *UNAIDS Compendium on HIV/AIDS-related Stigmatization, Discrimination, and Denial: Research Studies in India and Uganda and a Comparative Analysis of the Two Studies* has been published in English, French, and Spanish.

Further, UNAIDS has funded the development and field-testing of a protocol for identifying discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS. Field testing was conducted in Cote d’Ivoire, the Philippines, and Switzerland.

Strengthening networks on HIV/AIDS, human rights, ethics and law

UNAIDS networks at the national, regional and international levels in order to enhance partnerships to promote and protect human rights in the response to HIV/AIDS.

Strong partnerships have been built with the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations and its regional members in Africa (AFRICASO), Latin America and the Caribbean (LACASO), Europe (EUROCASO), and Asia and the Pacific (APCASO). Through the provision of technical and financial support to these networks, UNAIDS helps to strengthen the capacity of national, regional, and international communities to mobilize and contribute to HIV/AIDS and human rights dialogue.

UNAIDS also networks with organizations of persons living with HIV/AIDS. For example, financial and technical support has been provided to the Asia Pacific Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (APN+) to provide peer education and training to research and document HIV/AIDS related discrimination. A survey has been undertaken in India, Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand. Activities to address the research findings will be implemented in each of their countries

Engaging Critical Sectors: Legislators and Parliamentarians

UNAIDS works with legislators and parliamentarians to strengthen their roles in the HIV/AIDS response and advance HIV/AIDS related human rights.

UNAIDS and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) jointly published and launched, in the four British Parliaments, the *Handbook for Legislators on HIV/AIDS, Law and Human Rights*- published in English, French, Russian and Spanish.

The *Handbook for Legislators on HIV/AIDS, Law and Human Rights* documents the principles in the *International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights*, analyses these principles in terms of actions required to be taken by legislators, and cites best practice examples demonstrating how some countries have successfully implemented the guidelines. The Handbook also provides a particularly useful feature for legislators: summary checklists against which current policies or legal reform can be assessed.

Technical support and evidence was provided at a hearing of the United Kingdom Westminster All Party Parliamentary Group on HIV/AIDS. The outcome of the hearing was publication of *The UK, HIV and Human Rights: recommendations for the next five years*, which proposes reforms required.

Additionally, UNAIDS has supported the SADC Parliamentary Forum to hold meetings in April 2001 and February 2002 on the role of the SADC Forum in addressing HIV/AIDS. At these meetings SADC resolved to set up a standing Committee on HIV/AIDS and elected members and chairperson and has developed strategic work plans.

Training in HIV/AIDS and Human Rights

UNAIDS, in collaboration with other UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), provides training on HIV/AIDS and human rights.

UNAIDS and the OHCHR have held workshops for representatives of human rights NGOs and HIV/AIDS NGOs to identify mechanisms to promote a human rights agenda relevant to HIV/AIDS and identified how human rights can be mainstreamed into HIV/AIDS and vice versa. Similar workshops have been convened for the managers of national AIDS programmes.

In Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States., UNAIDS has held workshops for lawyers to strengthen the regions' technical expertise in law, ethics, and HIV/AIDS.

Workshops on human rights for AIDS service organizations and people living with HIV/AIDS have also taken place in Canada, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Bulgaria and Cambodia. Funding and technical support has also been provided to the Asia Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organizations (APCASO) to develop a training module on human rights for HIV/AIDS community groups for the Asia Pacific Region. The module focuses on how to investigate violations, plan recourse, implement action, and monitor HIV/AIDS related human rights.

With regards to ethics, UNAIDS has convened regional consultations in Brazil, Thailand, Uganda, the United States, and Switzerland on the ethical and legal issues involved in vaccine development. The culmination of these consultations is the production of the *Guidance Document on Ethical Considerations in HIV Preventive Vaccine Research*.

Further, UNAIDS, WHO, and the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS), have conducted training workshops on ethical and legal issues in biomedical research in Europe, Africa, Latin America, and South East Asia. These regional meetings culminated in an international conference on HIV/AIDS research and health care in developing countries was also held in Geneva, Switzerland.

With regards to young people, UNAIDS and UNESCO have conducted a training workshop for young people on human rights and HIV/AIDS in Paris, France. The workshop assembled best practices strategies to address HIV/AIDS related discrimination faced by young people. A joint UNESCO and UNAIDS publication: *Human Rights and HIV/AIDS: Young People in Action*, published in English, French, and Spanish. Regional trainings, using this publication have been undertaken in Africa (Cape Town South Africa) , Asia(Bandung, Indonesia) in 2002. This year trainings have been planned for the Arab region (Beirut, Lebanon) and Francophone Africa (Yaoundé, Cameroon).

At a regional level, in Latin America, UNAIDS, in collaboration with the Latin American Council of AIDS Service Organizations, conducted a Central America and the Caribbean regional workshop in July 2001 to identify human rights implications of national AIDS strategic plans in the region. Regional projects have been developed and resources are being mobilized.

In Africa, UNAIDS collaborated with the OHCHR on a regional training workshop for government lawyers and other policy makers in Gaborone, Botswana. The workshop focused on economic, social and cultural rights, using HIV/AIDS as a case study.

With regards to National Human Rights Institutions, UNAIDS, OHCHR, and the Asia Pacific Forum and National Human Rights Institutions held a regional workshop on human rights and HIV/AIDS in Melbourne, Australia in October 2001. A similar workshop was held in Lome, Togo in April 2001 for African national human rights commissions.

This year, UNAIDS in collaboration with OHCHR and National Human Rights Institutions (NI's) will be developing a Manual addressing the role of NI in advancing HIV/AIDS related issues within its mandate.

Providing Technical Assistance and Advice

UNAIDS, on request, provides technical assistance to States and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to integrate human rights in national HIV/AIDS policies, legislation and programmes.

UNAIDS has intensified its activities in human rights and HIV/AIDS at the national and community level. For example, UNAIDS is supporting legal and human rights experts in local NGOs and community based organizations in Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Tanzania. The role of these experts is to integrate human rights into HIV/AIDS prevention and care programmes being undertaken by community groups, provide HIV/AIDS and human rights training, mainstream human rights into HIV/AIDS national strategic plans, and provide legal advice to people living with HIV/AIDS whose rights have been violated.

Producing best practice publications

UNAIDS, in collaboration with other partners, has published a number of documents in the area of HIV/AIDS and human right. These documents have been widely distributed at the national level:

- *A Handbook for Legislators on HIV/AIDS, Law and Human Rights* (UNAIDS and the Inter- Parliamentary Union), (English, French, Russian and Portuguese);
- A collection of twenty human rights case studies called *Human Rights and HIV/AIDS: Effective Community Responses* (Human Rights Internet) (English);
- A Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography on *Legal and Ethical Issues Raised by HIV/AIDS* (the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network), (English and French);
- *A Human Rights Approach to Employment: the Southern African Development Community's Code on HIV/AIDS and Employment* (AIDS Law Project, South Africa), (English);
- *HIV/AIDS-related Stigmatization, Discrimination and Denial in India and Uganda: Forms, Contexts and Determinants* (UNAIDS), (English, French, Spanish);
- *International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights* (UNAIDS and OHCHR), (English, French, Chinese, Spanish, Russian); and
- *UNAIDS Guide to the Human Rights Machinery* (UNAIDS), (English)
- *Revised Guideline 6 "Access to Prevention, treatment, care and support"* (UNAIDS AND OHCHR) (English, French, Spanish)
- *HIV/AIDS and Human Rights: Young people in action* (UNAIDS and UNESCO) (English, French, Spanish)

In conclusion, Chairperson UNAIDS stands committed to ensuring that rights of people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS are respected, protected, and fulfilled and that the impact of the epidemic is mitigated.

Human Rights should be enjoyed by all, irrespective of health status, including HIV/AIDS status.

Thank you.