



A *Global Reference Group on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights* has been established by UNAIDS. This Group will serve as an advisory body to UNAIDS, including the Secretariat and Cosponsors. Other organizations involved in policy, advocacy, program development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, research and training on a rights based approach to HIV/AIDS will also find the advice and products of this group useful.

Members of the Reference Group have been appointed by Dr. Peter Piot, UNAID Executive Director and have been selected in their personal capacities, based on their interest in and contribution to the fight against HIV/AIDS, legal and/or human rights expertise.

Professor Sofia Gruskin has been appointed Chairperson of the Global Reference Group on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights. The International Health and Human Rights Programme of the François Xavier-Bagnoud Centre for Health and Human Rights at the Harvard School of Public Health will be responsible for the coordination of the work of the Reference Group and will act as the Secretariat for the group.

This Reference Group will cover a wide range of topics including but are not limited to the following:

- Stocktaking of standards and approaches to linking HIV/AIDS and human rights in the work of UNAIDS and its co-sponsors leading to the development of a common methodology for analysis and terminology to ensure coherence;
- The development of indicators, including those to monitor risk, vulnerability and impact reduction, which sufficiently capture human rights concerns;
- The development of human rights tools and methods to support countries in the design of national AIDS strategies, plans, policies, and legislation; and
- The development of a UNAIDS Secretariat strategic approach for integration of HIV/AIDS related issues in the work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN human rights treaty bodies, charter-based bodies and other human rights mechanisms.

Ultimately, the work of this Group will contribute to a more cohesive and effective action within the UN system and also in countries. Thus, assisting in making rights based approach to HIV/AIDS more operational at national level.

The First meeting of the Group held in Geneva, Switzerland on 23 and 24 January 2003 reviewed the existing standards and approaches being deployed in advancing human rights in the context of HIV/AIDS, and identified substantive priority issues for future focus of the Reference Group and define modalities of work.

The second meeting is scheduled for 25- 27 August 2003.