

## The 2005-2010 World AIDS Campaign (WAC) - Key Advocacy Messages

The 2005-2010 World AIDS Campaign's goal is to ensure that governments and all other groups that can make a difference in responding to the AIDS epidemic *do* keep their promises. In June 2001, 189 Heads of State and government representatives signed the United Nations Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS - a long list of firm AIDS response commitments that national leaders pledged to fulfil. Since then, additional commitments have been made to strengthen the response. Some promises have been kept, many have not.

One way to encourage governments and other groups to meet their AIDS commitments is by using advocacy to bring about positive political, social, economic and cultural change in tackling the epidemic. Advocacy is indispensable in placing AIDS on political agendas. It can encourage governments to tackle taboo subjects such as sex and drug use and can galvanise broad-based political commitment and mobilise financial support for effectively responding to AIDS. At the moment, the pace of the AIDS epidemic is outstripping all efforts to respond to it. If governments and other key stakeholders do not keep their promises, advocacy activities can help to ensure that they do by acting as a catalyst for action or change. With successful advocacy, policymakers, decision-makers, individuals or the media can be motivated to take action.

### WHAT MAKES GOOD ADVOCACY?

Advocacy efforts vary widely, but in the AIDS context the goal is to exert influence on governments and other stakeholders to either take action or to change a course of action. Advocacy can involve working with community leaders, parliamentarians or other decision-makers to build political and popular support for resources and policies to ensure an effective AIDS response. Or advocacy can entail working with labour, faith-based or business communities to bring about change. Fundamentally, advocacy must be directed towards people with decision-making power and to those who influence them, such as the media. Finally, it is critical that advocacy be underpinned by a solid factual base.

### WORLD AIDS CAMPAIGN AND ADVOCACY

The WAC seeks to hold national and international policymakers accountable for delivering on their promises in the response to HIV and AIDS. The current Campaign, "Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise" is an appeal to governments and policy-makers to ensure that they meet the targets they have agreed in the fight against HIV and AIDS. The most important of these promises are in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, which was the outcome of the June 2001 UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS.

**The Declaration of Commitment** was agreed by all 189 Member States of the UN in June 2001. The governments of these countries committed themselves to take action on HIV and AIDS in the fields of leadership, prevention, care and support, treatment, reducing vulnerability, and human rights.

### KEY ADVOCACY MESSAGES

- Prevention programmes need to be strengthened at global, national, regional and local levels.
- Political leaders must be held accountable for the promises they make.
- Leadership must be characterised by frank and honest recognition of the impact of AIDS at the local level, and on the bold steps that must be taken to respond.
- The public can play a vital role in encouraging political will, and in securing financial resources needed to slow and eventually end the global AIDS crisis.
- People have a right to hold the international community to account for promises made and progress achieved towards keeping them. If politicians do not hear from us that the AIDS epidemic is a crucial issue that affects all people, there will not be enough funds generated to respond effectively to the disease.

- The WAC calls for increased financial, technical and human resources to be devoted to community-based efforts to improve and sustain people's health.
- Access to basic primary care, including HIV testing and counselling, should be ensured in order to stop the spread of HIV.
- Good health for people living with HIV and AIDS means good health for the community.
- Equitable access to treatment and care is a cornerstone of an effective AIDS response.
- Civil society must be involved as full partners in an expanded response to AIDS.
- Partnerships must be generated with every sector of society including civil society, people living with HIV and AIDS and the private sector.
- Effective campaigns need to reach the right people at the right time in order to create a supportive environment for behaviour change and skills development.
- Civil society needs to be united in its advocacy work in order to maximise the impact of AIDS campaigning efforts.
- An effective AIDS response is more easily achieved if skills are shared, lessons learned made available to everyone, and if good practice is pooled and easily accessible.