

## UPDATE AND INFORMATION NOTE

UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (23 - 25 April 2008) and the Board of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (28-29 April 2008)

# International Task Team on HIV-related Travel Restrictions



## BACKGROUND

The **International Task Team on HIV-related Travel Restrictions** (Task Team) was established by UNAIDS in the beginning of 2008 in the context of deliberations with the Board of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which at its sixteenth meeting (12-13 November 2007) decided *inter alia*:

**Board Action on the Right to Travel of People Living with HIV, Decision Point GF/B16/DP24:** The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria will not hold Board or Committee Meetings in countries that restrict short-term entry of people living with HIV/AIDS and/or require prospective HIV positive visitors to declare their HIV status on visa application forms or other documentation required for entry into the country.

**Acknowledgement of the UNAIDS Commitment to Create a Task Team on Travel Restrictions, Decision Point GF/B16/DP25:** Following GF/B16/DP24 the Board strongly encourages all countries to move rapidly towards elimination of travel/entry restrictions, including waivers, for people living with HIV. The Board acknowledges the UNAIDS commitment to create a Task Team with the aim of eliminating policies and practices that restrict travel for HIV positive people.

The Task Team is comprised of representatives of governments, inter-governmental organizations and civil society, including the private sector and networks of people living with HIV. Task Team members have experience and expertise in national responses to HIV, HIV-related advocacy and law, migration, and the human rights of people living with HIV. Members of the Task Team, many of whom have been working in isolation on the elimination of HIV travel restrictions, have welcomed the establishment of the Task Team and see momentum building on the issue. (See list of governments and organizations represented on final page).

As of 23 April 2008, the Task Team has established an e-workspace, met twice, and held smaller teleconferences, to consider the various issues involved in HIV-related travel restrictions and steps that might be taken to move toward their elimination.

**It is envisioned that HIV-related travel restrictions will be on the agenda at the Eighteenth Meeting of the Global Fund Board (November) and the Twenty-third Meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (December) at which times the Task Team will present its report and recommendations.**

## Current situation regarding HIV-related travel restrictions

There appear to be 74 countries that impose some form of HIV-specific travel restrictions on people wishing to enter or remain in a country for a short stay, such as business, personal visits or tourism, or for longer periods, such as for labour migration, employment, asylum or refugee resettlement or study. Of these, 13 countries ban HIV positive people from entering for any reason or for any length of time. Seventy-two countries have no travel restrictions. For some 22 countries, the information is contradictory, and for 27 countries, there is no information.<sup>1</sup>

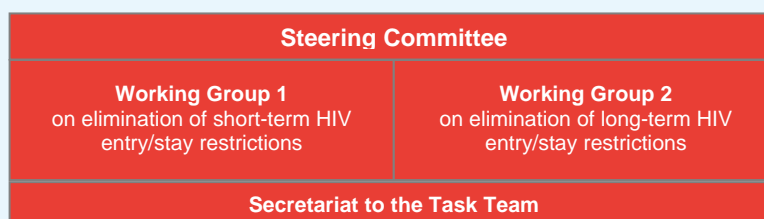
In terms of largest impact, travel restrictions appear to be felt most by labour migrants who either do not know they are positive, and at the last minute, are excluded or deported on arrival, or go to a host country uninfected, and are deported when they become infected, often without confidentiality and into situations of discrimination and economic hardship. The most visible impact is when HIV positive people are denied entry into countries where major conferences on HIV are being held, against the principle of the greater involvement of people living with HIV in the response to AIDS.

In its initial deliberations the Task Team has confirmed that:

- **HIV-related travel restrictions have no public health rationale and may in fact impede efforts to stop the epidemic.**
- **HIV-specific travel restrictions are discriminatory and contribute to the stigmatization of people living with HIV.**
- **HIV-travel restrictions are anachronisms, highly inappropriate in the age of globalization, increased travel, treatment for HIV, and national and international commitments to universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.**

## Structure and working methods of the Task Team

### INTERNATIONAL TASK TEAM ON HIV-RELATED TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS



The Task Team is an advisory/technical group whose role is to galvanise attention to HIV-related travel restrictions on national, regional and international agendas, calling for and supporting efforts toward their elimination. The principles of non-discrimination and the Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV form the core of the Task Team's work and provide the context in which its efforts are set. The work of the International Task Team is principally informed by the deliberations of two working groups: the **Working Group on Short-term HIV-related Travel Restrictions** and the **Working Group Long-term HIV-related Travel Restrictions**. The **Steering Committee** is comprised of the Government of Norway and UNAIDS acting as Task Team Co-chairs, the Global Fund, and the Co-chairs of the Working Groups (Short-term: Government of Brazil and Communities Delegation - Global Fund/AIDS Alliance)(Long-term: Government of the Philippines and CARAM Asia). The Task Team is supported by a Secretariat – the International AIDS Society.

<sup>1</sup> This information is taken from the website of the European AIDS Treatment Group and is based on a survey which was originally done by the German AIDS Federation in 1999 and has been continually updated. The information has not been independently verified. See <http://www.eatg.org/hivtravel/>

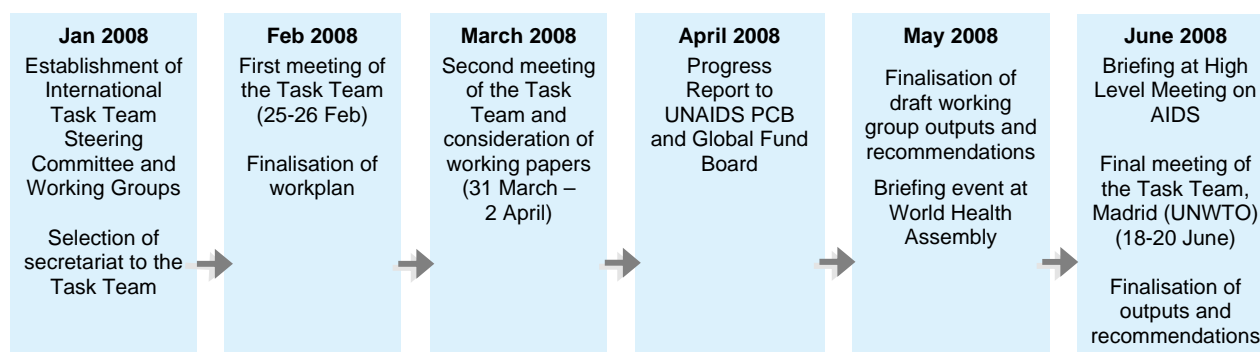
## Specific Recommendations for Positive Change

The Task Team will generate recommendations for the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board and the Global Fund Board, as well as other interested parties, on specific actions that different stakeholders (government, civil society, intergovernmental organizations and the private sector) can take to move towards the elimination of HIV-related travel restrictions. The recommendations will support the principles of non-discrimination and the Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV, and call for rational HIV-related policies and programmes for travellers, migrants and mobile populations in sending and receiving countries – in the context of efforts to achieve universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, as agreed by governments at the High Level Meeting on AIDS (2006).

Through its Working Groups and Steering Committee, the Task Team has begun:

- **To increase attention to the issue of HIV-related travel restrictions internationally, regionally and nationally by, among other things, raising the issue at all upcoming opportunities**
- **A critical mapping of the current situation related to short-term and long-term HIV-related travel restrictions**
- **Development of key messages and recommendations regarding the entry and stay of people living with HIV, particularly in the current context of globalization, increased mobility, greater access to treatment and commitments under the Declaration of Commitment (2001) and Political Declaration (2006)**
- **Development of advocacy tools and support for various national and international stakeholders to support the elimination of travel restrictions, and**
- **Compilation of case studies regarding (a) the impact of travel restrictions on individuals and (b) examples of positive change in laws and policies at national level.**

### Key Events in the International Task Team Process \*



**Presentation of Task Team recommendations at:**  
*International AIDS Conference, Mexico August 2008*  
*Global Forum on Migration and Development, Philippines October 2008*

**Formal Submission of Task Team recommendations:**  
*Global Fund Board, Eighteenth Meeting November 2008*  
*UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, Twenty-third Meeting December 2008*

\* *Dates may be modified*

# International Task Team on HIV-related Travel Restrictions

## *Steering Committee and Working Group Participation*

<b>Steering Committee</b>	
<b>UNAIDS Secretariat (Co-Chair)</b>	
<b>Norway (Co-Chair)</b>	
<b>Brazil (Working Group Co-Chair – short-term restrictions)</b> <b>Communities Delegation, Global Fund / AIDS Alliance (Working Group Co-Chair – short-term restrictions)</b> <b>Philippines (Working Group Co-Chair – long-term restrictions)</b> <b>CARAM Asia (Working Group Co-Chair – long-term restrictions)</b> <b>Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria</b>	
<b>Working Group on short-term HIV entry/stay restrictions</b>	<b>Working Group on long-term HIV entry/stay restrictions</b>
<b>Brazil (Co-Chair)</b> <b>Communities Delegation, Global Fund / AIDS Alliance (Co-Chair)</b>	<b>Philippines (Co-Chair)</b> <b>CARAM Asia (Co-Chair)</b>
<b>Burkina Faso</b>  <b>China</b>  <b>El Salvador</b>  <b>France</b>  <b>United States of America</b>  <b>Cameroon Network of Associations of PLWHA</b>  <b>Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network</b>  <b>European AIDS Treatment Group</b>  <b>Ford Foundation</b>  <b>Global Network of People Living with HIV</b>  <b>Human Rights Watch</b>  <b>International AIDS Society</b>  <b>International Council of AIDS Service Organizations</b>  <b>Terrence Higgins Trust</b>  <b>World AIDS Campaign</b>  <b>Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria</b>  <b>Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights</b>  <b>World Health Organization</b>  <b>World Tourism Organization</b>	<b>Burundi</b>  <b>Djibouti</b>  <b>Ghana</b>  <b>India</b>  <b>Netherlands</b>  <b>Bolivian Network of People Living with HIV</b>  <b>Coalition to Lift the Bar</b>  <b>Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance</b>  <b>Gay &amp; Lesbian Health Norway</b>  <b>German AIDS Federation</b>  <b>Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria</b>  <b>International Community of Women Living with HIV</b>  <b>UN Plus</b>  <b>International Labour Organization</b>  <b>International Organization for Migration</b>  <b>Inter-Parliamentary Union</b>  <b>UNDP</b>  <b>UN High Commissioner for Refugees</b>
<b>Secretariat to the Task Team – International AIDS Society</b>	