



Ferney-Voltaire, France, November 30<sup>th</sup> 2008

Today, medical students globally are joining hands, raising their voices in unity and standing together in the fight against the spread of HIV /AIDS.

Members of the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) are showing their dedicated support to people living with HIV/AIDS though raising awareness among their peers about HIV prevention, fighting stigma and discrimination and advocating for a universal access to prevention, treatment and care.

Whilst this World AIDS Day is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the HIV/AIDS epidemic remains the worst infectious epidemic humanity has faced. Members of the Standing Committee on Reproductive Health including AIDS (SCORA) are using this opportunity to show to the world that we are all affected by HIV/AIDS and that we all need to get involved in this fight. Youth are the key in the fight to stop the spread of HIV leading to a better future for mankind.

IFMSA National Member Organizations are working hard in more than 50 countries to make the World AIDS Day 2008 a memorable one. Members of SCORA have been preparing for months for this event through conferences, awareness campaigns, TV and radio shows, musical concerts and much more.

A compilation of WAD plans showed a great enthusiasm to have our voices united with the rest of the organizations worldwide in order to strengthen the global response towards HIV/AIDS epidemic. Collaboration with the World AIDS Campaign progresses on daily basis, making our efforts unified and stronger. This is a critical period, when achieving the Millennium Development Goal for HIV/AIDS is being re-discussed and reviewed. Decreased statistics of the number of people living with HIV/AIDS in the world is controversial, the rate of new infections is still high and the high proportion of infections in young people places a disproportionate burden on this population. Provided that half of the world's population is young people, meaningful youth participation is of the essence.

Women's involvement in the fight against HIV/AIDS is also a key factor to the success of all the international strategies to face the HIV spread. Despite this evidence-based knowledge, women's voices are still under-represented and under-recognized.

Members of IFMSA remain committed to: "Stop AIDS, Keep the Promise" and are supporting the "Leadership" message chosen by UNAIDS and reinforced by WAC. Future physicians are taking the lead in their communities and their countries following the IFMSA motto: "Think globally, act locally"

IFMSA is not simply an organization gathering over 1 million students around the world, but it is an active network of young people engaged in their communities in order to achieve a global change. Our organization holds more than 102 national member organizations in 95 countries. In official relations with the WHO since 1969, IFMSA is recognized as the international voice of medical students. Its activities include 10,000 medical student exchanges a year and a wealth of student led projects, which fall into four main fields of interest: medical education, public health, human rights and peace, and reproductive health including HIV/AIDS. IFMSA activities have the ultimate motive of preventing conflicts through peace and global understanding.

We, as medical students committed to fight AIDS and all related forms of stigma and discrimination, raise our voices on this day to reaffirm our commitment and involvement and to join efforts once again as youth leaders and future physicians.

**On behalf of the IFMSA Team of officials 2008-2009**

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