

## China lifts travel ban for people living with HIV

**GENEVA/BEIJING, 27 April 2010** – UNAIDS applauds the decision by the Government of China to lift its national travel ban for people living with HIV. The news comes ahead of the opening of Shanghai Expo 2010, an international fair that is expected to attract millions of visitors over the next six months.

“I commend President Hu Jintao for China’s decision to remove travel restrictions based on HIV status,” said United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. “Punitive policies and practices only hamper the global AIDS response. I urge all other countries with such restrictions to remove them as a matter of priority and urgency.”

UNAIDS strongly opposes any laws that restrict movement based on HIV-positive status only; such restrictions are discriminatory and do not prevent HIV transmission or protect public health. Further, travel restrictions have no economic justification, as people living with HIV can lead long and productive working lives.

“Every individual should have equal access to freedom of movement — regardless of HIV status,” said Michel Sidibé, UNAIDS Executive Director. “This is yet another example of China’s leadership in the AIDS response.”

Fifty one countries, territories, and areas currently impose some form of travel restriction on the entry, stay and residence of people living with HIV based on their HIV status; five countries deny visas to people living with HIV for even short-term stays; and 23 countries deport individuals once their HIV-positive status is discovered.

In January 2010, the United States of America removed its long-standing HIV-related entry, stay and residence restrictions. Several other countries, including Namibia and the Ukraine, have recently pledged to take steps to remove such restrictions.

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Leveraging the AIDS response, UNAIDS works to build political action and to promote the rights all of people for better results for global health and development. Globally, it sets policy and is the source of HIV-related data. In countries, UNAIDS brings together the resources of the UNAIDS Secretariat and 10 UN system organizations for coordinated and accountable efforts to unite the world against AIDS. [www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org)