



Media Advisory

Rights Here, Rights Now:

Addressing Legal Environments Blocking Effective HIV Responses

New York, 12 July 2010 – Legal environments play an important role in HIV responses. As noted in the Vienna Declaration, laws and practices that punish those living with or most vulnerable to HIV have a damaging effect on the epidemic and response. Whether in the context of same-sex sexual relations, drug use, HIV transmission, anti-discrimination, or sex work, supportive legal environments can be powerful tools for countries struggling to control their epidemics. In line with the much welcome human rights focus of AIDS 2010, UNDP will host two press conferences to showcase new initiatives on addressing the role which laws, law enforcement and access to justice play in facilitating effective HIV responses.

Press Conference #1

Title: Global Commission on HIV and the Law

The Commission will develop evidence-informed recommendations for national legal environments that promote effective HIV responses. Representatives from the Commission, together with representatives from UNDP, UNAIDS and civil society will engage in dialogue with the media to highlight the key legal and human rights issues which are ‘game-changers’ for the HIV response.

Venue: Press Conference Room 3 (Media Centre)

Date: 7/19/2010

Time: 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Participants: H.E. Festus Mogae, Former President of Botswana and Commissioner, Global Commission on HIV and the Law; Shereen El Feki, Commissioner, Global Commission on HIV and the Law; Mr Prasada Rao, Member Secretary, Global Commission on HIV and the Law; Jeffrey O’Malley, Director, UNDP HIV/AIDS Practice; Paul De Lay, Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, UNAIDS; (moderated by Murray Proctor, Australia’s AIDS Ambassador)

Press Conference #2

Title: Legal environments, human rights and HIV responses among men who have sex with men and transgender people in Asia and the Pacific: An agenda for action

Despite recent successes, current legal environments often fail to adequately protect the rights of men who have sex with men and transgender people. Male-to-male sex is criminalized in 19 out of 48 countries in the Asia Pacific region, leading in many cases to vigilantism and abuse by local authorities. The study’s author, together with representatives from UNDP and civil society will discuss the key findings.

Venue: Press Conference Room 3 (Media Centre)

Date: 7/21/2010

Time: 10:00 AM - 11:00 PM

Participants: Jeffrey O’Malley, Director, UNDP HIV/AIDS Practice; John Godwin, lead author; Shivananda Khan OBE, Chair of APCOM; (moderated by Dr Mandeep Dhaliwal, UNDP Cluster Leader: Human Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity)

For more information contact:

Zoran Stevanovic | Bratislava | Regional Communications Advisor UNDP, Europe and the CIS | tel. +421 2 59337 428, mob. +421 908 729 846 | zoran.stevanovic@undp.org

Dr. Mandeep Dhaliwal | New York | Cluster Leader: Human Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversities Cluster, UNDP | tel. +1 646 642 4612 | mandeep.dhaliwal@undp.org

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