



MEDIA ADVISORY

9th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific

Symposium: Overcoming Legal Barriers to Comprehensive HIV Prevention Among Men Who Have Sex with Men and Transgender Persons in Asia and the Pacific

29 July 2009

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health (APCOM) will co-host a symposium on “**Overcoming legal barriers to comprehensive prevention among men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender (TG) persons in Asia and the Pacific**” during the 9th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP) to be held in Bali from 9-12 August 2009.

Across the Asia and the Pacific region, current legal structures often fail to adequately protect the rights of MSM and TG persons. Criminalization of male-to-male sex exists in many countries, and these laws often taken on the force of vigilantism, leading to abuse and human rights violations. Even in the absence of active criminalization, other provisions of law and practice obstruct HIV and AIDS intervention, advocacy and outreach, and delivery of services. These institutional barriers significantly increase the vulnerability of MSM and TG to HIV and have an immense adverse effect on their lives and health. This very debate was at the heart of the recent landmark ruling by the Delhi High Court that Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code unfairly discriminates against MSM and consenting adults in general.

This symposium will discuss how effective HIV prevention can take place only when a conducive and enabling environment is created that allows unimpeded dissemination of prevention messages, appropriate provision of services, and the creation of confidence among the most marginalized and vulnerable to seek critical information and access health related services. The 90 minute symposium will feature the following speakers and will include a 20 min Q/A session.

Venue: Nusa Indah, Bali International Conference Center (BICC), Westin Hotel, Denpasar, Bali

Date and Time: 11 August 2009, 16:00 – 17:30

Chairs:

Jeff O’Malley, Director, HIV/AIDS Practice, UNDP
Shivananda Khan, O.B.E., Chairperson, APCOM

Panelists:

Hon. Justice Michael Kirby, High Court of Australia
Anand Grover, UN Special Rapporteur on Health
Hon. Dame Carol Kidu, Member of Parliament and Minister for Community Development, Papua New Guinea
Prof. Vitit Muntarbhorn, Professor of Law, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
John Godwin, HIV and Development Consultant

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