

Global Working Group on HIV and Sex Work Policy: Points for meeting with Michel Sidibé, 27 March 2009

NOTE: This meeting of 27 May does not substitute for any other consultation of sex work networks or organizations associated with UNAIDS Guidance Note on HIV and Sex Work.

NSWP, the Global Network of Sex Work Projects, is a global organizations constituted with a board made up of members of five regional networks of sex work projects. NSWP represents sex work groups and projects worldwide. The Global Working Group on HIV and Sex Work Policy was established by NSWP to focus on the UNAIDS Guidance Note.

General principles of collaboration

Meaningful collaboration between UNAIDS and the Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP) and regional networks of sex workers, of which the goal is respectful sharing of views and expertise on key issues related to HIV and sex work, has the following elements:

- inclusion of NSWP and regional networks of sex workers in key UN and national consultations related to HIV and sex work;
- inclusion of NSWP and regional networks of sex workers in key decision-making steps of the design, implementation and evaluation of policy and programmes flowing from the UNAIDS Guidance Note;
- invitations to consultations are sent to NSWP and regional networks of sex workers rather than to individuals in the Network to enable NSWP and the regional networks to identify expert participants;
- invitations to attend consultations should be issued with adequate lead time and clear explanation of the objectives of the consultation as well as how the results of the consultation will be used;
- consultations should include adequate funding to enable participation of sex worker networks and organizations in low-resource settings;
- provision of UN documents related to sex work and HIV in UN languages in addition to English, as well adequate translation services at meetings to which sex workers are invited;
- all parties should use opportunities for interaction with donors to encourage the allocation of resources for building capacity of sex worker organizations in civil society;
- at country and regional level, UNAIDS should advocate for inclusion of sex worker networks and organizations in policy and programme decision-making; and
- UNAIDS should coordinate its co-sponsors as champions of the human rights of sex workers when member state policies threaten or violate the rights of sex workers.

Moving forward from the Guidance Note

With respect the UNAIDS Guidance Note on HIV and Sex Work (2009), collaboration with sex worker organizations and networks should be based on a shared commitment to the human rights of sex workers as persons and as workers. Specifically, we ask:

- (1) that a working group facilitated by UNAIDS and co-chaired by NSWP on HIV and sex work policy be established with adequate representation of sex worker organizations, including NSWP and regional networks of sex work projects, and UN agencies working directly on sex work, to (a) oversee the programmatic follow-up to the Guidance Note, including a detailed focus on policy and programmes in 5-6 countries as well as global developments, and (b) provide ongoing advice on the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes and policies related to HIV and sex work;

- (2) that the UNAIDS Secretariat allocate adequate resources to make this working group a viable and functioning body;
- (3) that HIV prevention and care among sex workers not be categorized as part of violence against women in the UNAIDS Outcome Framework, 2009-2011 (“Joint Action for Results”) but rather as part of the priority area “addressing punitive laws, policies, practices and stigma that block effective responses to HIV,” with sex work to be explicitly noted in this priority area; and
- (4) that the UNAIDS-facilitated working group develop further guidance on a number of areas where ambiguity in the Guidance Note may be an impediment to responses to HIV, namely:
 - reduction of demand for sex work as a high-priority goal;
 - conflation of human trafficking and sex work;
 - exiting from sex work as a desirable goal with respect to HIV outcomes; and
 - the need for recognition of criminalization and repressive policing as major impediments to HIV programmes and policies.