

## *The Global Working Group on Sex Work and HIV Policy*

New Delhi  
20th September 2007

Dear Peter,

We are writing to you in the context of the 2007 UNAIDS Guidance Note: HIV and Sex Work. After the PCB meeting of June 2007 at which it was decided to continue the process of developing the UNAIDS Guidance Note on HIV and Sex Work, the Network of Sex Work Projects convened a working group to consolidate the ideas and views that were raised by sex worker groups and civil society organisations at each of the UNFPA consultations.

As you already know, we are deeply concerned about the changes to UN policy contained in the Guidance Note. From the outset of the HIV pandemic, human rights and harm reduction have been at the centre of the UN responses. The draft Guidance Note is inconsistent with the previous UN approach which was based on respecting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of sex workers in programs and policies related to sex work and HIV. It implicitly rejects UNAIDS' earlier emphasis on improving the situation of sex workers by empowering them to take control of their social and work conditions.

The proposed changes in the approach which have raised the most concern among sex worker organizations are:

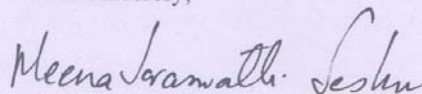
- An emphasis on reducing commercial sex rather than reducing HIV
- The conflation of human trafficking with sex work
- Entrenchment of police and law enforcement in HIV prevention programming with sex workers
- A lack of focus on measures to protect HIV positive sex workers from stigma and discrimination and ensure their access to treatment and care
- The invisibility of male and transgender sex workers and a lack of guidance in programming for them

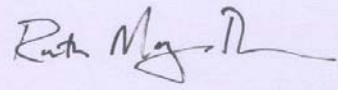
While sex worker organizations around the globe fully support the millennium development goals such as girls' education, poverty reduction and increased options for women we are particularly worried about the potential for resources to be diverted from urgent, targeted HIV prevention efforts to these general long term, development goals.

The attached document, which was presented to the UNAIDS and UNFPA representatives in Delhi, outlines sex workers' visions of ways forward for national and global responses to the human rights and public health challenges around HIV and sex work. We hope that this document identifies common ground and offers a meaningful starting point for the process leading up to the finalization of the Guidance Note and subsequent country-level implementation.

We appreciate your representatives' commitment to continuing discussions with the Global Working Group on Sex Work and HIV Policy and we look forward to meeting with you to progress this matter at the earliest opportunity, hopefully before the next Programme Coordinating Board meeting.

Yours Sincerely,

  
Meena Saraswathi Seshu



Ruth Morgan Thomas

On behalf of  
The Global Working Group on Sex Work and HIV Policy

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