



## **BANGKOK LEADERSHIP STATEMENT** **XV International AIDS Conference, Bangkok, Thailand**

**July 16, 2004**

The leadership programme of the XV International AIDS Conference in Bangkok brought together leaders of people living with HIV, males who have sex with males, people who inject drugs, sex workers, women, young people, leaders from AIDS programmes, governments, NGOs/CBOs, the private sector, religion, science, uniformed services, and the world of work. This is our statement of commitment. Today we leaders remember the millions of people who have died as a result of AIDS and the millions of people who are living with HIV. These were and are the first AIDS leaders, struggling with neglect, social exclusion, discrimination, abuse and denial. We pay our respects to people living with HIV, who are the primary leaders in the fight against the epidemic. Most of them are unrecognized and their struggle is silent and invisible.

**We are ashamed** that in 2004 some 38 million people are living with HIV/AIDS and fighting the same battles after two decades. Despite all that we have learned about what works in prevention and treatment, the epidemic is on the rise in every region.

We recognise that we have not done enough to protect people from new infections. We have not done enough to provide access to affordable treatment and care to all those who need it. We have not done enough to combat stigma, unnecessary criminalization, and discrimination, or to reduce the risk and vulnerability of tens of millions of young people and adults.

We are also concerned that we have not succeeded in meaningfully involving infected and affected people in our response.

We acknowledge that **we have failed** to provide enough information, education, prevention tools and technologies, treatment, care and support. Our inability to ensure human rights, equity, opportunities, and a supportive and enabling environment for all has helped to fuel the epidemic.

Today we as leaders from all levels and all sectors, have come together to commit to improving the quality of life of those people who are living with HIV/AIDS or, affected by it, and to prevent further infections. We hold ourselves accountable – collectively and individually- to strategies and actions including:

- Supportive policies and legislation
- Scaled up programmes in prevention, care, treatment and impact alleviation
- Increased financial and human resources
- Mobilizing other leaders in the response
- Accountability to fulfilling all commitments and promises made so far

We commit to transforming our world into a loving and caring one, and to working towards changing the attitude of everyone in the community, in order to eradicate stigma, unnecessary criminalization, and discrimination. The leaders among us from government, the private sector, the community and the world of work commit ourselves to coordinate efforts, not only among ourselves but also with international organizations and donors and through mechanisms such as the World AIDS Campaign. We also reaffirm and strengthen the principles and implementation of the “three ones” as articulated by UNAIDS and its partners. We commit to strengthen a broad-based multi-ministerial and multi-sectoral response.

We are deeply concerned that our response to the epidemic is often motivated by value judgments. We commit to base our actions on human rights, informed science and to implement evidence-based interventions.

We must acknowledge the threat to, and suffering, of all vulnerable people including children, young people, women, sex workers, people who inject drugs, males who have sex with males and migrant and displaced persons – and commit to reducing their vulnerability to HIV infection.

The world has agreed on the UNGASS Declaration of Commitments and other declarations that focus on achieving an exceptional response to HIV/AIDS. Our Leadership Statement supports these earlier commitments of the world's leaders and holds governments, the private sector, communities and international organizations accountable for its implementation.

We the leaders from various communities and groups gathered here have developed our own respective declaration of leadership commitments. These statements of commitment are an integral part of this Bangkok Leadership Statement and we want the world to pay special attention to them. The statements of each group will motivate the leaders from that group and will be their guide to action. Each group commits to develop mechanisms of accountability towards the fulfillment of their commitments.

Realising the urgency for action, we promise to start acting on our commitments immediately and to report on our progress at the XVI International AIDS Conference in Toronto.

*As presented at the XV International AIDS Conference by Ms. Graca Machel, Patron of the Leadership Programme on July 16, 2004 in Bangkok.*