



PRESS RELEASE

UNAIDS and ITUC to work together to increase access to HIV services for workers

GENEVA, 25 April 2012—The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) have signed a memorandum of understanding to eliminate stigma and discrimination, protect human rights and facilitate access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support for workers.

“This MOU will result in further bringing the voice of workers to the AIDS response. An effective engagement of trade unions will enhance the protection of rights at work and contribute to the realization of the goal of getting to Zero,” says Mr Juan Somavia, Director-General of the ILO.

One of the commitments adopted by United Nations Member States in the 2011 Political Declaration on AIDS is to mitigate the impact of the epidemic on workers, their families and their dependents, as well as the impact on workplaces and economies. The declaration also calls for the effective implementation of the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) standards on AIDS and the world of work.

“The trade union movement is deeply committed to the AIDS response. The involvement of unions enhances and strengthens both the credibility and effectiveness of workplace initiatives. Protection from discrimination at work, and ensuring access to HIV prevention and treatment services are also crucial areas in which unions are fully engaged,” said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

In 2010 a non-governmental consultation on stigma and discrimination found that more than one third of people living with HIV had experienced loss of employment, denial of health care, social or vocational exclusion and/or involuntary disclosure.

“It is unacceptable that people lose their jobs or source of income because of their HIV status,” said Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS. “Trade Unions are vitally important in the AIDS response to protect workers’ rights and inform workers about access to HIV services.”

UNAIDS and the ITUC, in collaboration with ILO, will unite efforts on a number of specific activities to increase HIV services for workers including advocating to remove travel restrictions for people living with HIV, to enforce laws which protect people living with HIV and access to justice, to mobilize political commitment and to trigger debate on young people, employment and HIV.

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[Zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS-related deaths.](#)

UNAIDS

UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, is an innovative United Nations partnership that leads and inspires the world in achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Learn more at unaids.org.

ITUC and HIV

The ITUC has worked on AIDS and workplace issues since the mid 1980's, promoting and supporting national and international efforts on HIV in and through the world of work. It represents 175 million workers through 311 affiliated organizations. The ITUC works closely with the ILO—the UNAIDS Cosponsor taking the lead on developing and implementing policies and programmes to protect workers from HIV infection and facilitating equal access to care, treatment and support and social protection for people living with or affected by HIV.