

PRESS RELEASE

UNAIDS and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi launch #zerodiscrimination campaign in Australia

New international day for Zero Discrimination announced

Melbourne, 1 December 2013—On the occasion of World AIDS Day 2013, the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and Nobel Peace Prize Winner and UNAIDS Global Advocate for Zero Discrimination Daw Aung San Suu Kyi are launching the #zerodiscrimination campaign calling for a global transformation. The initiative will launch the new Zero Discrimination Day on 1 March 2014, adopting the butterfly as the transformative symbol for zero discrimination.

“I believe in a world where everyone can flower and blossom. We can all make a difference by reaching out and letting people lead a life of dignity irrespective of who they are,” said Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. “I invite everyone to Open up, Reach out and end discrimination.”

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé announced the Zero Discrimination campaign during a World AIDS Day event in Melbourne, Australia.

“As communities and individuals we must continue to take action to reduce transmission of HIV and ensure that people living with HIV can participate fully in the life of the community, free from stigma and discrimination,” said Australia's Minister for Health, the Hon Peter Dutton.

“We recognize that getting to zero new HIV infections and zero AIDS-related deaths will be impossible without striving towards zero discrimination,” said Mr Sidibé. “On Zero Discrimination Day, we will celebrate the rights of everyone to live a full and productive life with dignity”.

Discrimination can affect people in many ways in their lives.

For the AIDS response, discrimination towards people living with HIV and key populations at higher risk of HIV is a major obstacle to expanding access to HIV services. Country surveys found that 1 in 7 people living with HIV have reportedly been denied access to healthcare and more than 1 in 10 people living with HIV have been refused employment because of their HIV status.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has taped a public service announcement (PSA) with the message “Open up, Reach out. Together we can reach zero discrimination.” Through the PSA, a campaign web page and social media outreach, the campaign asks people around the world to join the conversation and take action.

The initial phase of the initiative will continue until December 10 – International Human Rights Day and will then build momentum in the month leading up to the new Zero Discrimination Day.

In 2012, an estimated:

35.3 million [32.2 million – 38.8 million] people globally were living with HIV

2.3 million [1.9 million – 2.7 million] people became newly infected with HIV

1.6 million [1.4 million – 1.9 million] people died from AIDS-related illnesses

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UNAIDS

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) leads and inspires the world to achieve its shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. UNAIDS unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank—and works closely with global and national partners to maximize results for the AIDS response. Learn more at unaids.org and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.