

## PRESS RELEASE

### Countries around the world celebrate Zero Discrimination Day

*UNAIDS is inspired by the incredible response to the first Zero Discrimination Day*

**GENEVA, 1 March 2014**—People from all walks of life and in every region of the world are commemorating Zero Discrimination Day with a wide range of activities. UNAIDS called for the annual event, which is being celebrated for the first time on 1 March.

"Hatred of any kind must have no place in the 21st century," said the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

"Discrimination is a violation of human rights. It is immoral, hurtful and dehumanizing. Yet too many people around the world continue to face unfair, harmful or violent treatment simply because of the circumstances of their birth or environment," said Dr John Ashe, President of the General Assembly.

UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé has expressed his appreciation for the outpouring of support for the campaign. Working with Nobel Peace Prize winner and UNAIDS Global Advocate for Zero Discrimination Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, UNAIDS launched the #zerodiscrimination campaign in December 2013 on World AIDS Day.

"For all who seek a more just world, for all who strive for peace and prosperity—let us start by stopping the inequality and discrimination happening around us," said Mr Sidibé.

Many government ministries, lawmakers, business leaders and international organizations are supporting the zero discrimination campaign.

"Institutionalized discrimination is bad for people and for societies," said Dr Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank Group. "Widespread discrimination is also bad for economies. There is clear evidence that when societies enact laws that prevent productive people from fully participating in the workforce, economies suffer."

"Achieving zero discrimination is critical for the success of the AIDS response. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is fully committed through its Getting to Zero at Work campaign," said Guy Ryder, Director-General of ILO.

"Eliminating discrimination is the one step that can enable the world to achieve the UN General Assembly's 2011 target of a 50 per cent reduction of HIV infection among people who use drugs by 2015," said UNODC Executive Director Yury Fedotov. "Take that step, say yes to #zerodiscrimination, commit, transform and let's reach the target."

The butterfly is widely recognized as a sign for transformation and the campaign has adopted it as the symbol for zero discrimination. People have supported the campaign by taking photographs holding up the butterfly symbol in places across the globe, including snowy mountain tops, office cubicles, amusement parks, fire stations and the world famous carnival in

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. At a commercial shopping complex in Kandy, Sri Lanka, campaign supporters are organizing a mass photography shoot with the zero discrimination symbol.

The Asia-Pacific Transgender Network has used the occasion of Zero Discrimination Day to produce in partnership with UNAIDS a powerful video about the transgender experience. The Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV and AIDS is holding a series of country-level and regional dialogues with government, civil society, business and religious groups, as well as young people, on the importance of building solidarity for everyone. The Youth Taekwondo Association of Tajikistan is holding an event called “Sport against stigma and discrimination.”

Many celebrities have recorded video messages or taken photographs with the butterfly, including the global Indian icon and UNAIDS International Goodwill Ambassador Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, the popular Russian science commentator and naturalist Nikolai Drozdov and the highly acclaimed musician from Mali and International Goodwill Ambassador Toumani Diabaté. The international television broadcaster CNN is supporting the campaign and many local and regional media outlets are featuring discussions on zero discrimination. In Pakistan, Radio Pakistan and PTV World, the country’s only English channel, hosted talk shows with people from key groups who often face discrimination.

More information is available at:

<http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/campaigns/20131126zerodiscrimination/>

<https://www.facebook.com/zerodiscrimination>

<http://zerodiscrimination.tumblr.com/>

#zerodiscrimination

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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](http://unaids.org) and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.