

## PRESS STATEMENT

### **UNAIDS calls for full and complete access to quality health care, including mental health care, for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people**

**GENEVA, 17 May 2016**—UNAIDS stands with people and organizations around the world in commemorating the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT) on 17 May, the day 26 years ago when the World Health Organization declassified homosexuality as a mental disorder. The IDAHOT theme for 2016 is mental health and well-being.

Although there is still much progress to be made to achieve UNAIDS' vision of zero discrimination, there have been encouraging steps in the right direction. In June 2015, Mozambique decriminalized homosexuality in its new penal code. In September 2015, some 12 United Nations agencies issued a powerful joint call to action on ending violence and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people. In May 2016, the Government of the United States of America released guidance "to help provide educators the information they need to ensure that all students, including transgender students, can attend school in an environment free from discrimination based on sex."

"It is unacceptable that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people face violence and discrimination just because of who they are and who they love," said UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé. "They are our sons and daughters, our brothers and sisters, our friends and colleagues. LGBTI rights are human rights. We must challenge prejudice wherever we are."

Many LGBTI people continue to face enormous daily challenges, sometimes living in fear, in isolation and out of reach of life-saving health services. Fear of abuse or discrimination by health-care workers prevents people from accessing HIV testing and treatment services. In addition, a large percentage of LGBTI people face isolation and discrimination in their immediate social environment, negatively affecting their mental health.

Reaching the Sustainable Development Goals, which include ending AIDS by 2030, requires the end of discrimination in all its forms.

UNAIDS calls for full and complete access to quality health care for LGBTI people, including access to mental health services, which are often less well supported in health systems. "Act with compassion. Embrace diversity. Leave no one behind," added Mr Sidibé.

Ending discrimination will be one of the central themes discussed at the upcoming United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Ending AIDS, taking place at the United Nations in New York, United States of America, from 8 to 10 June 2016. For more information, go to [www.hlm2016aids.unaids.org](http://www.hlm2016aids.unaids.org).

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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 towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Learn more at [unaids.org](http://unaids.org) and connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.