

PRESS RELEASE

What if ... Zero Discrimination Day 2018

GENEVA, 1 March 2018—Discrimination is often based on misinformation or fear of the unknown. By reflecting on people in everyday situations, on Zero Discrimination Day, 1 March, UNAIDS is challenging people to recognize where everyday discrimination takes place and to take action to stop it.

This year's Zero Discrimination Day campaign invites people to ask themselves "What if ..." and to reflect upon their own actions.

What if the person you bought your vegetables from was living with HIV? Would you buy tomatoes from him?

What if your neighbour had tuberculosis? Would you stop to chat?

Allowing discrimination to continue is not only wrong, it is bad for communities, bad for the economy and bad for the future. Discriminating against women affects food production: women make up 43% of the agriculture workforce in developing countries and yet only 5% are able to access agricultural advisory services.

"We will never guarantee the right to health and end the AIDS epidemic if we exclude people," said the Executive Director of UNAIDS, Michel Sidibé. "However, huge structural barriers stand in the way of the health and well-being of millions."

No one should ever be discriminated against because of their HIV status, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, race, ethnicity, language, geographical location or migrant status, or for any other reason. Unfortunately, however, discrimination continues to undermine efforts to achieve a more just and equitable world. People face discrimination every day based on who they are or what they do.

Access to health services is essential to prevent and treat HIV. And yet approximately one in five people living with HIV reported avoiding going to a local clinic or hospital because they feared stigma or discrimination related to their HIV status.

Discrimination will not disappear without actively addressing the ignorance, practices and beliefs that fuel it. Ending discrimination requires action from everyone. Zero Discrimination Day is an opportunity to highlight how everyone can be a part of the transformation and take a stand towards a more fair and just society.

Zero Discrimination Day has been observed every year since 1 March 2014.

Join us for #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 towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Learn more at unaids.org and connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.