

## PRESS STATEMENT

### Armenia lifts travel ban for people living with HIV

**GENEVA, 15 July 2011**—The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) commends the decision by the Government of Armenia to lift its travel restrictions for people living with HIV. The reforms—which took effect yesterday—align the country’s legislation with international public health standards.

Restrictions that limit an individual’s movement based solely on HIV-positive status are discriminatory and violate human rights. There is no evidence that such restrictions protect public health or prevent HIV transmission. Furthermore, HIV-related travel restrictions have no economic justification, as people living with HIV can lead long and productive working lives.

“I welcome Armenia’s decision to lift its HIV-related travel restrictions,” said UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé. “I urge other countries to follow Armenia’s example and take the necessary steps to remove punitive laws and practices as a matter of priority,” he added.

With the removal of Armenia’s travel restrictions, UNAIDS counts 48 countries, territories, and areas that continue to impose some form of restriction on the entry, stay and residence of people living with HIV based on HIV status. Five countries deny visas even for short-term stays and 22 countries deport individuals once their HIV-positive status is discovered.

#### Contact

UNAIDS Armenia | Naira Sargsyan | +374 10 52 13 41 | [sargsyann@unaids.org](mailto:sargsyann@unaids.org)  
UNAIDS Geneva | Saira Stewart | tel. +41 22 791 2511 | [stewarts@unaids.org](mailto:stewarts@unaids.org)

#### UNAIDS

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