



Press statement

UNAIDS Condemns Killing of AIDS Activist in Jamaica

Geneva, 7 December 2005 -- UNAIDS condemns the recent killing of Lenford "Steve" Harvey, a Jamaican AIDS activist who, since 1997, worked tirelessly with the Jamaica AIDS Support to contribute to the response to the AIDS epidemic.

Steve Harvey's death is a profound shock and loss not only to the AIDS movement in Jamaica and the Caribbean, but to the whole world. UNAIDS expresses its sincere condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues.

Steve Harvey will be remembered as an extraordinarily brave and committed activist, who, irrespective of the dangers of his work, represented the interests of people living with HIV and those at risk of infection. His courage was inspiring and his capacity to reach out to those in need outstanding, providing them one on one counseling, and access to HIV and AIDS information and services.

UNAIDS is confident that the Government of Jamaica will investigate Steve's death to ensure that those who committed this hideous crime are brought to justice.

UNAIDS reiterates its support for the strengthening of efforts by the Jamaican government to address homophobia and other causes of stigma and discrimination, which are fuelling the spread of AIDS not only in Jamaica but across the Caribbean.

Legal and policy reform have an important role to play in ensuring that human rights of all are respected, and also in helping to change broader social values and in setting standards. It is freedom from fear and discrimination that will finally empower individuals and communities to act, to mobilize their resources, and to respond collectively and positively to the AIDS epidemic.

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