

# Women's Leadership on HIV and AIDS The Nairobi 2007 Call to Action

DECLARATION & SUGGESTED STRATEGIES FOR  
IMPLEMENTATION MADE AT THE WORLD YWCA  
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S SUMMIT, JULY 2007

We affirm the human rights of women and girls and recognise that the realisation of these rights is critical to an effective response to the global AIDS pandemic and the future of our world. We commit to lead change in our communities to transform the lives of women and girls everywhere, especially those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. We believe that women's leadership is essential in changing the course of this pandemic.

**The Nairobi 2007 Call to Action** builds on the commitments made by others before us<sup>1</sup> and key strategies identified by members of the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS. Central to these are promoting the leadership of women and girls, securing their human rights, ensuring women's equitable representation in decision making and expanding resources for women.

**By taking leadership into our hands and uniting in strength as a movement of women, we can lead the change we wish to see in the world.** We unite in solidarity regardless of HIV status, age, creed, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or ethnicity.

We do this because we care about ourselves, our families and our communities.

We commit to create and sustain change for women and girls, particularly those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. We will achieve change individually through our thoughts, words and actions, and collectively with our families, friends, colleagues, faith groups and communities as part of the global women's movement.

<sup>1</sup>These include ICW's 12 statements 1992, the Barcelona Bill of Rights of 2002, the NGO Code of Conduct, the Canadian Blueprint document of 2006 and the Johannesburg Position on HIV/AIDS and Women's and Girls' Rights in Africa, 2006, With Women Worldwide Compact to End HIV/AIDS, 2006, and the Panama Declaration of 2006. These and other documents may be found on the World YWCA website.



World YWCA

**International Women's Summit:  
Women's Leadership on HIV and AIDS July 4-7  
World YWCA Council July 2007 ●●●**



# Kenya2007

Changing Lives Changing Communities



We seek to create change in ten key areas for action that are based on existing knowledge and evidence about the life experiences of women and girls around our world, particularly those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. The ten critical areas for change are:

**1. Developing the leadership of women and girls to respond to HIV and AIDS, overcome stigma and discrimination and offer solidarity and support to all women and girls and particularly those infected and affected by HIV**

- > **Challenging** our own ignorance and fears, changing how we talk about HIV, and encouraging others to do the same
- > Interacting with HIV positive women in respectful ways, offering **solidarity** for advocacy efforts and seeking support from women living with HIV to educate and transform our minds and activities to avoid discriminatory practices and policies
- > **Supporting** HIV positive family members, friends and colleagues whenever they are confronted with discriminatory, harmful and hurtful attitudes
- > Educating and **training** women and girls to respond to the impact of HIV and AIDS in their lives and communities
- > Supporting **education** campaigns that increase understanding of how HIV affects us all and contribute to ending the discriminatory treatment of women and girls infected and affected by HIV
- > Working in **solidarity** across borders to advance equality for women and engage communities in issues of justice for women and girls
- > Encouraging **faith communities** to be a just and compassionate voice for all women and girls, especially HIV positive women and girls
- > Lobbying to **outlaw** discriminatory practices based on gender and HIV status

**2. Ensuring the meaningful involvement of women infected and affected by HIV in relevant decision making, respecting our right to self determination and enabling our participation in the development of AIDS strategies, programming and decision making bodies**

- > Offering support to HIV positive women and girls when we/they feel ready to speak out and disclose our HIV status
- > **Including** HIV positive women and girls, our/their organisations and agendas in the broader women's movement, in ways which are accessible, respectful, meaningful and sustainable
- > Encouraging the training and **paid involvement** of HIV positive women and girls in peer support, treatment literacy and other caring roles
- > Promoting the views and voices of HIV positive women and girls from our own communities in our local and national **media**
- > **Lobbying** for the meaningful participation of HIV positive women in national AIDS coordinating bodies and the development of national AIDS strategies

**3. Promoting gender equality and the human rights of women and girls including laws that protect these rights, education of those who must uphold them and services that enable women to claim our rights**

- > Challenging our own thoughts, words and actions about **gender roles** and responsibilities, as well as the sexist attitudes and behaviours of others
- > Recognising that all women have equal human rights and working to eradicate **discriminatory laws and practices** against women formerly and currently in prisons, women from indigenous communities, women with disabilities, women drug users, women without formal education, women migrants, women living in poverty and women in the sex trade

> Using a **gender perspective** in our work by understanding how programmes work for women, resourcing the full participation of all women in the programme and incorporating sex disaggregated monitoring and evaluation systems

> Developing **partnerships with men and boys**, which enable them to recognise the negative effects of gender inequalities on their own lives, change how they view and treat women and girls, and to see the benefits of gender equality for us all

> Lobbying for **implementation** of international agreements on gender equality and the protection of women's human rights and for laws that uphold these

> Promoting **education** of police, judiciary, lawyers, social service providers, civil servants and community leaders about laws and their legal responsibilities

> Advocating for legal aid services and other forms of support for women to be able to claim their rights

> Challenging the inherent structural gender inequalities in institutions in which we are stakeholders

**4. Ensuring the physical, sexual and psychological safety and security of women and girls and an end to violence in all aspects of our lives, and working with men and boys to make this a reality**

> Educating ourselves and others about the impact of **violence and conflict** on women and girls in our communities and other parts on the world

> **Volunteering** our time and/or resources to organisations working with women who have survived violence and supporting events that highlight abuse against women

- > Promoting programmes that enable women and men, girls and boys to develop self esteem, **build strong and healthy relationships** and learn about the cycle of violence that can develop in relationships
- > Nurturing relationships of **respect** with other women and girls and valuing the multifaceted contribution women make to our societies
- > Challenging **relationships** that are built on power over women and children
- > Supporting programmes that enable **perpetrators** of violence to manage anger and stop violent behaviours and actions
- > Promoting **peace** and an end to **conflicts** which endanger women and children through the proliferation of small arms, involve innocent civilians and use rape as a weapon of war
- > Remembering that I do not deserve to be abused in a relationship and that I can seek help from others and find the strength and **courage** to return to safety

**5. Promoting the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all women and girls, including the right to safe motherhood for all women, healthy and safe practices that minimise the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and expansion of female initiated HIV prevention methods**

- > Looking after our own **physical, sexual and mental health**
- > Being **tested** for HIV and other STIs to safeguard against potential health problems for ourselves and our partners
- > Informing ourselves and others about **effective HIV prevention strategies**, including the use of male and female condoms, newer technologies, and the role of equality and communication in skills in healthy relationships

- > Ensuring that women throughout the world have **access** to life saving devices such as the male and female condom as well as the power to use them
- > Promoting prevention strategies that work for women and harm reduction programmes that are **informed by scientific evidence**
- > Educating ourselves about **microbicides** and **vaccines** in development, and ensuring that all women, whether HIV negative or HIV positive, take part in clinical trials from a position of informed consent
- > Advocating for the right to **safe motherhood** for all women, irrespective of HIV status
- > Lobbying against laws that seek to **criminalise** HIV transmission and related activities
- > Putting **human rights** at the centre of educational campaigns and interventions in culturally appropriate ways

**6. Ensuring education, economic security and access to resources for women and girls including the right to own and inherit property**

- > Lobbying for universal primary and secondary school **education** for all girls and boys and supporting alternative schooling options for early school leavers
- > Building skills that enable women and girls, particularly those infected or affected by HIV, to become financially secure through economic activity
- > Encouraging programmes that expand access to **credit** and resources for women and girls
- > Promoting public recognition of the vast contribution of women's **unpaid** labour to national economies and support for the paid participation of women in the workplace
- > Increasing awareness of the links between **poverty** and gender, and their relationship to violence and HIV infection

- > Lobbying governments to ensure that women have equal access in law and practice to **land, property and housing**, especially through inheritance
- > Lobbying governments, multilateral agencies and the private sector to **alleviate poverty** and promote just trade practices
- > Challenging discrimination against people living with HIV in **employment** and unjust attitudes towards purchasing goods and services produced and/or sold by people living with HIV

**7. Expanding access to services for women infected and affected by HIV, including safe voluntary testing, care, treatment and support as well as expanded services for wider voluntary community testing**

- > Endeavouring to take our **medications** properly and supporting others to do the same, particularly as they face the daily challenges of living with HIV
- > Supporting **campaigns** for food security, clean water and shelter, access to nutritious food, treatment, treatment literacy and health care for all women and girls specific to their needs
- > Promoting increased voluntary **community wide awareness, pre- and post-test counselling and testing options**, which reduce the burden of testing on women, particularly when they are pregnant
- > Advocating for universal access to **paediatric** formulas to improve the health of children and alleviate the physical and psychological burden of care on their mothers
- > Improving **accessibility, affordability, safety, sustainability and effectiveness** of testing, treatment, care and support for women and girls by:

- A** Ensuring that health care professionals build strong, **respectful and non judgemental relationships** with women and girls, especially HIV positive women

**B** Including HIV positive women in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of testing and treatment programmes

**C** Lobbying **drug companies** to invest in more research to better respond to the needs of HIV positive women and children, including drugs for co-infections such as TB, hepatitis, malaria and herpes

**D** Lobbying governments, trade bodies and financial institutions to improve equitable **access** to medications, especially in countries where the epidemic affects women in disproportionate numbers

**E** Ensuring **affordable** health care that takes into account related hidden costs, such as child care, transport and blood tests

- > Expanding support to caregivers who have assumed the burden of care in relation to the epidemic

**8. Promoting the human rights of young women and children by revising AIDS strategies to respond to the reality of their lives, preventing new infections and providing solidarity, care and support for those already infected and affected by HIV**

- > Protecting all children in our own care and ensuring that they have all of the non judgemental information, love and care that they need to protect themselves from physical, psychological and sexual harm
- > Lobbying for the legal **protection** of all children and access to any medications needed to keep them happy, healthy and alive
- > Lobbying to end **trafficking** of children and involvement of any children in the sex trade
- > Providing young women and girls with information on their sexual and reproductive health and rights, how to **protect themselves** from contracting HIV and other STIs and avoid spreading infection to others, wherever possible, as well as assess personal risks associated with sexual activity

- > Promoting non judgmental skills based training for young women and men on healthy relationships, negotiation, **assertiveness** and communication, as well as opportunities to examine difficult issues surrounding HIV and AIDS

- > Ensuring the meaningful **involvement** of young women in the development, delivery and evaluation of programmes designed to meet their needs
- > Initiating programmes that equip young women and men to challenge and overcome the **stigma and discrimination** of living with HIV in schools and among their peer groups

**9. Advocating for increased resources to support the capacity of women to lead change on HIV and AIDS and recognising the valuable assets that women and girls bring to the response**

- > Lobbying governments, donors and other institutions to **increase** resource allocations for programmes that work for women and girls
- > Ensuring the good management and **accountability** of existing resources allocated to programmes for women and girls
- > Providing women with the information, skills and **training** to lead change, particularly in organisational and financial development, advocacy and leadership
- > Mentoring other women, sharing our knowledge, offering **inspiration**, encouraging boldness and believing in our ability to make a difference
- > **Contributing** our own resources to organisations that are leading change on HIV and AIDS
- > Securing our own **resources** to make a difference in the lives of women and girls

**10. Promoting the participation, empowerment and leadership of women at all levels of society including equitable representation of women at the highest levels of national political, executive, legislative and judicial structures around the world**

- > Endeavouring to be a leader who acts with **integrity** and is supportive of other women, particularly those infected or affected by HIV, who embraces transparent accountability and seizes opportunities for change
- > Ensuring that the voices and views of women and girls, particularly those infected and affected by HIV, are heard and **respected**, and airing our own views when these issues are insufficiently addressed
- > **Nominating** women to positions of power and influence and supporting their candidature
- > Promoting **policies** that enable women to participate fully in decision making bodies, including access to child care and family friendly practices
- > Lobbying governments to ensure equitable **representation** of women across all areas of public decision making

Our leadership can change our world. We commit to advance these ten critical actions to create change in the lives of women and girls around the world and particularly those infected or affected by HIV and AIDS. We pledge to turn these words into action. **We can be the change we wish to see in the lives of all of us as women and girls infected or affected by HIV and AIDS.**

**World YWCA International Women's Summit: Women's Leadership on HIV and AIDS**

**Nairobi, July 7, 2007**