



UNAIDS e-Dialogue on universal access

Summary of discussions

Week 1: Focusing where progress is lagging behind, country by country

We are very happy to say that the first week of the UNAIDS e-dialogue on Universal Access has been a great success! The dialogue has benefited from the contribution of many participants from across the world addressing a wide range of topics reflecting the complexity of the HIV epidemic. Drawn from bilateral donors, civil society, academia, the UN system, national governments, more than 450 people have registered. Participants have highlighted some critical areas for the global response to HIV for focus on to help scale up to Universal Access. Here is a very brief synopsis of some of the most issues which came through most strongly.

Stigma and discrimination is one of the major cross-cutting themes that have been raised by many participants. The HIV response is surrounded by a culture of silence and fear. Fear of getting tested, fear of disclosing one's status, fear of being discriminated within one's own community or by healthcare providers when seeking health care in ART centers.

Myths and misunderstanding around the modes of transmission reinforce this fear and it is striking to see that after twenty years of advocacy and information sharing around the disease. A lack of knowledge and education about the epidemic among the youth and most vulnerable groups remains an enormous challenge to be tackled in order to effectively scale up prevention efforts. A striking example was given by one contributor that some men who have sex with men are not aware that HIV can be transmitted through anal sex.

A number of participants stressed the need for a greater role of civil society in AIDS responses. Further empowering civil society groups, especially people living with HIV faith based organisations was highlighted as a critical opportunity to strengthen the AIDS response that does not require enormous sums of money.

Efficient and strategic data is also missing and it seems there is a need for strengthened monitoring systems to inform successful prevention strategies. This data is particularly important for most at risk vulnerable persons including men who have sex with men and people with disabilities.



Some interesting comments were made related to making legal systems work better for the AIDS response. HIV transmission should be decriminalized. Take advantage of the WTO Trade Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) clauses that allow countries to increase availability of medicines for anti-retroviral treatment.

A number of cross-cutting themes were raised by contributors addressing different issues. A number of participants called for a more harmonized responses to AIDS. One specific issue was to strengthen the links between AIDS and sexual and reproductive health. Another cross-cutting issue was gender and the need to focus on the different roles of girls and women and men and boys. Also there were repeated calls to further decentralize AIDS services to ensure that “hard to reach groups” are not neglected.

Once again, we would like to thank all participants for their contribution to the e-dialogue on Universal Access. We look forward to more exciting discussions as this week we turn to the issue of *Capitalising on synergies between the AIDS, health and Development Agendas*.

Thank you / Merci / Gracias / спасибо!

The Moderation Team.