

Activists Call on UNAIDS' Sidibé to Walk the Talk for Key Populations

Harare, 30 November 2015 – A coalition of activists representing key populations called on UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé to stand in solidarity and speak up about the needs and rights of people living with HIV, men who have sex with men (MSM), sex workers, people who use drugs and trans-diverse persons.

The call came after Mr. Sidibé failed to mention key populations during his remarks at the opening session of the 18th International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA) in Harare, Zimbabwe.

“In closed meetings and in some public forums Mr. Sidibé is our partner and ally,” the activists said. “This week in Harare, when we have needed him most, he did not mention us.”

“You mentioned us and stood with us in Addis, in Cape Town, in Shanghai and last week in Kingston, why not in Harare?” they asked. “Sex workers, MSM and other key populations have had difficulty entering Zimbabwe, with materials seized and harassment. Now more than ever we need our leader to stand with us. You have to walk the talk in all places, not just those where it is politically convenient.” this is a clear indication of the silent apathy of political association that assassinates the broader discourse of HIV and commitment that Mr. Sidibe.

The activists called on Sidibé and other prominent speakers at ICASA2015 to follow the principles of walking the talk:

- If you say it in private, you should say it in public.
- If you say you are in solidarity, you should take public action that demonstrates your sincerity.
- If you represent the principles of Human Rights, indivisibility and universality, you should always have the back of the people you are supporting

The coalition called on Mr. Sidibé and other leaders in the HIV response to stand in solidarity with key populations and ensure accountability to key population communities and investment within key population-led initiatives in order to achieve the end of AIDS.

Follow and join the call for meaningful support on social media with #WalktheTalk and show your support with #IStandinSolidarity.

Sign-on list in formation

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