

# AIDS Advocacy Alert



How you can participate in and influence  
the high-level meeting on AIDS

April 2008

The purpose of this alert is to assist you in advocating to be part of your national delegation to the high-level meeting (HLM) in June 2008, to influence your government's representation and statements at the meeting, or to directly participate yourself.

## Background

In December 2007, the General Assembly approved a Resolution (A/62/L.40)<sup>1</sup> that sets out the process for the 2008 comprehensive review of the progress in implementing the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS. The Resolution (an official, binding agreement) includes a decision that the high-level meeting be held on 10 - 11 June 2008.

Other key decisions include:

Encouraging Member States (governments) to include civil society in their national delegations (in other words, the official national representatives).

As in previous years, civil society organizations were invited to apply for accreditation (official permission) to attend the meeting. The application process is now closed. The President of the General Assembly has submitted a list of the names of those who applied to the member states for official approval.

An agreement to an opening plenary that will include a speaker who is openly living with HIV, five thematic panel discussions, and an informal interactive hearing with civil society (civil society speakers and statements from governments.)

A call for governments to submit national reports by 31 January 2008<sup>2</sup> and for the UN Secretary General to submit a report on the progress and challenges six weeks before the high-level meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://data.unaids.org/pub/BaseDocument/2008/a-res-62-178\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/BaseDocument/2008/a-res-62-178_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Country reports are available on the UNAIDS website at:  
<http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/HIVData/CountryProgress/2007CountryProgress.asp>

## A. Advocate to be part of your country's national delegation

It is hoped that each Member State will send a senior delegation to the meeting. In most cases, the delegates will participate in the plenary (main UN discussion for governments to present statements for the record), panel discussions and the civil society hearing. Their speeches will influence the outcome document (summary of discussions) of the meeting.

### ACTION

You should be advocating that your government sends the highest level of official (for example, the President, Prime Minister, or Health Minister), and that the delegation includes representatives of civil society from your country, particularly from organizations of people living with HIV. This involvement can help ensure that there statements include the unique perspectives and experiences of civil society.

#### Here are some tips on how you may approach this:

Contact your UNAIDS Country Coordinator to obtain the relevant information and to identify who you need to contact in your country delegation.

Contact people you know in the National AIDS Control Programme, or the Department or Ministry of Health, or other relevant departments, to advocate for the highest official representation and the inclusion of civil society.

Contact other civil society organizations (CSOs) in your country and work at developing a common strategy for this advocacy effort. Get CSOs together to discuss which individuals will best represent the civil society sector as part of the national delegation.

#### Some arguments that you can use to ensure involvement:

The UNGASS Declaration of Commitment (DoC) specifically calls for civil society to be involved in the national periodic reviews to track the progress achieved; to identify problems and obstacles that may hamper achieving progress and to realizing the commitments, and to ensure wide dissemination of the results of these reviews.

The Resolution dealing with the organization of the 2008 high-level meeting on AIDS:

*“Encourages Member States to include in their national delegations to the high-level meeting parliamentarians, representatives of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and organizations and networks representing people living with HIV/AIDS, women, young persons, orphans, community organizations, faith-based organizations and the private sector.”(A/RES/62/178 Paragraph 3).*

## B. Influence your government's participation

Whether or not civil society representatives are included in your country's delegation, you can still influence the positions that your government takes at the HLM. Each of the national delegations will be preparing their statements prior to the meeting. It is vital that the unique perspectives and experience of civil society are included in these preparations and deliberations.

Here are some suggestions of how to go about this:

1. All governments were asked to submit progress report on the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment to UNAIDS (by January 31, 2008). These reports are the basis for an overall report that will be drafted and presented by the UN Secretary General at this meeting. Ask your government for a copy of its national report, and analyze how your government's report reflects the reality in your country. You can also access most government reports on the UNAIDS web page<sup>3</sup>.
2. Review the reports submitted by civil society organizations, particularly analyzing how NGOs participated in the reporting process, and to what extent their feedback was incorporated into the government's report.

You can find some of the "community reports" at: [http://www.icaso.org/shadow\\_reports.html](http://www.icaso.org/shadow_reports.html)

3. Meet with other CSOs in your country to work out a common position and strategy for influencing your national delegation on key AIDS priorities and their statements at the HLM.
4. Ask for an opportunity for NGOs in your country to meet the members of your national delegation. The meeting should include a representative of your Department or Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The UNAIDS country office can play a role in organizing or facilitating this meeting if it proves to be difficult to organize.

## C. Contact accredited NGOs with your key messages and issues

Whether a representative of your NGO can attend the meeting in New York or not, and whether you have opportunities to influence the positions taken by your government, or not, you should contact accredited NGOs to make sure that issues from your country and community are discussed. This is vital, as the official outcome document of the meeting will be a summary of the discussions, and therefore opportunity to have on official UN record of your concerns and issues that affect you in your country.

The list of accredited NGOs will be available in the coming weeks. The accredited NGOs that take part in the HLM are the eyes and ears of communities around the world. You should use them to channel information and perspectives to the HLM, and you should call on them to update the NGO community about the overall progress and developments of the HLM and its outcomes.

You should contact the accredited NGOs directly (once the list of accredited organizations is made public by the OPGA, it will be available by e-mailing [universalaccess2010@icaso.org](mailto:universalaccess2010@icaso.org). We will also post the list to our own site at [www.icaso.org](http://www.icaso.org) and will distribute the list widely through ICASO's different ListServes).

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/HIVData/CountryProgress/2007CountryProgress.asp>

## D. Participate as an "accredited" NGO

"Accredited" NGOs will be allowed to attend the plenary sessions of the HLM (though available seating is limited), as well as other related events (panel discussions, civil society hearings etc.), again depending on available space. There will also be official and CSO side-events, meetings and networking of CSOs.

More information on these will be sent out soon. Contact [universalaccess2010@icaso.org](mailto:universalaccess2010@icaso.org) for updates.

"Accredited" NGOs are:

NGOs that already have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC status) and which have requested to be accredited for the HLM. ECOSOC accredited organizations are able to add additional participants by inputting the login credentials (received after registration) at <http://www.un-ngls.org/un aids/status/en>

NGO representatives who are delegates to the Programme Coordination Board of UNAIDS (PCB).

Other NGOs that have applied for accreditation through the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Services (NGLS) and will be accorded special authorization to attend the review meeting. [Please note again that the application process is now closed.]

