



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION
126th Assembly and related meetings
Kampala (Uganda), 31 March to 5 April 2012



**Making the law work for the response to AIDS:
Zero new infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths**

Panel discussion organized by the IPU and UNAIDS

Tuesday, 3 April 2012, 3 - 5.30 p.m.
Gardenia, ground floor, Imperial Royale Hotel

Background

Today, progress against AIDS is picking up pace rapidly thanks to the bold and committed actions of political leaders, scientists and affected persons. Infection rates are dropping across the world, and antiretroviral treatment has been proven not only to save lives, but also to reduce infectiousness by 96 per cent.

From a global perspective, recognition of the critical relevance of the law with regard to HIV has led to a growing commitment by States to ensure that laws, policies and regulations support effective AIDS responses. In the *Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (2001)*, governments committed themselves to protecting the human rights of people living with HIV, women and members of vulnerable populations. In the *Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (2006)*, they further committed to overcoming legal, regulatory or other barriers that block access to effective HIV prevention, treatment, care, support, medicines, commodities and services. In 2011, governments reaffirmed and built on these commitments by adopting the *Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS: Intensifying Our Efforts to Eliminating HIV/AIDS (2011)*, which reinforced their commitment to "intensify national efforts to create enabling legal, social and policy frameworks in each national context in order to eliminate stigma, discrimination and violence related to HIV and promote access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support."

However, the laws themselves have not always kept pace with scientific or political developments, often introduced and implemented in the context of outdated modes of fear and ignorance regarding how HIV is or is not transmitted and how the law can best support the HIV response. As a result, many countries still have laws, regulations or policies that present obstacles to effective HIV prevention, treatment, care and support for the people living with, or most vulnerable to, HIV.

This panel discussion will address the successes and challenges in making the law work for the AIDS response, highlighting how parliamentarians can achieve the commitments under the *2011 Political Declaration* and illustrating how parliamentary leadership has played a critical role in driving towards the vision of zero new infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. It will draw attention to examples of partnerships between parliamentarians and people living with and affected by HIV aimed at breaking taboos, increasing understanding about HIV, guaranteeing non-discrimination and leveraging the AIDS response for wider health gains, including maternal and child health. It will address the role of parliamentarians in creating legal frameworks that take full advantage of trade flexibilities and expand access to life-saving medications and other HIV commodities. The panel will also discuss the opportunities for parliamentarians to advance law reform for a more effective response to the epidemic, as well as justice system improvements. It will further reflect on the positioning of parliamentarians as critical leaders who can take forward the new vision for the AIDS response.

Format

The panel session will be divided into two segments by topic reflecting on how the law can: (1) eliminate stigma and discrimination and (2) help expand access to HIV prevention and treatment. Within each segment, the panel will proceed as follows: led by an experienced moderator, an initial discussion will take place on stage between four persons: two members of parliament, a leading expert on HIV and the law, and a person living with HIV. The moderator will initiate the discussion by fielding questions to the panellists on stage and fostering a lively exchange. This will be followed by a moderated and interactive discussion between the panellist and members of the audience. Each panellist should be informed in advance that they will only have 3-4 minutes to speak on each topic. There will be no speeches, Power Point presentations or prepared statements.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Opening (10 minutes)

Opening remarks: Ms. Sheila Tlou, Director of the UNAIDS Regional Support Team for East and Southern Africa, former Member of Parliament and Minister of Health of Botswana

Segment 1 – Using the law to eliminate HIV-related stigma and discrimination (40 minutes)

Moderated discussion with the following panellists:

- Ms. Barbara Lee (Congresswoman, United States)
- Ms. Thabitha Khumalo (Member of Parliament, Zimbabwe)
- Mr. Allan Maleche, Kenya Legal and Ethical Issues Network on HIV & AIDS

Possible issues for discussion

- Making sure non-discrimination laws address HIV
- Addressing discrimination in various sectors through legislation, regulations and policies – health, employment, education, housing, social services
- Eliminating restrictions on entry, stay and residence
- Key programmes to combat stigma and discrimination – examples/case studies

Q&A (20 minutes)

New set of panellists join the stage.

Segment 2 – Using the law to revolutionize HIV prevention and treatment (40 minutes)

Moderated discussion with the following panellists:

- Ms. Marleen Temmerman (Senator, Belgium)
- Mr. Elioda Tumwesigye (Member of Parliament, Uganda)
- Ms. Michaela Clayton, AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (Namibia)
- Person living with HIV (TBA)

Discussions will focus on the following topics:

- Using the law to help meet the targets of the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS
 - o Reduce sexual transmission
 - o Prevent transmission among persons who use drugs
 - o Eliminate new HIV infections among children
 - o Eliminate gender inequalities
- Using protective legal approaches to reduce vulnerability among key populations
- Using the law to achieve the 2011 Political Declaration's target of 15 million accessing treatment by 2015
- Country experiences of the power of MPs' leadership

Q&A (20 minutes)

Closing (15 minutes)

Concluding remarks: Ms. Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga, Speaker of the Ugandan Parliament (10 minutes)

Moderator to close (5 minutes)

Moderator:

- TBA

Participation

The panel will be open to all delegates attending the 126th IPU Assembly.

Languages

The languages of the panel will be English, French, Arabic and Spanish.