

## A CALL BY

### THE COALITION FOR SEXUAL AND BODILY RIGHTS IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES\*

We, non-governmental organizations and experts from 15 countries of the Middle East, North Africa and South/Southeast Asia, believe that the 2006 High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS constitutes an occasion for reaffirming and enhancing the commitments made by our governments and the international community at the UNGASS 2001.

We strongly believe that the current position taken by some OIC countries at this meeting does not represent the civil society perspectives and best practices regarding HIV/ AIDS within our countries, as well as our commitment to the universality and indivisibility of human rights.. We as non-governmental organizations, struggle on a daily basis to provide sexual and reproductive health services, reform laws that discriminate or violate human rights, including sexual and reproductive rights, provide comprehensive sexuality education, combat violence against women, including marital rape and sexual abuse, reach out to and protect vulnerable groups and break the taboos associated with sexuality. Full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all is an essential element in the global response to the pandemic.

We underline that the taboos and the politicization of issues around sexuality are major hindrances to prevention of the epidemic in our countries. The denial of the existence of youth and premarital sexuality, extra-marital sexuality, sex work and same sex practices constitutes a dangerous threat to the well-being and public health in our societies.

We are also concerned that some developed countries are failing to commit to the allocation of sufficient resources for HIV/AIDS programs and to establish measurable and time-bound Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms.

Given the imminent threat of an outbreak of the epidemic in our countries, we call upon those countries that the OIC claims to represent:

- To adopt and implement programs and policies to ensure access to affordable and quality sexual and reproductive health services and comprehensive sexuality education for all girls and boys;
- To promote and protect sexual and reproductive rights for all;
- To adopt measures to fully empower women and girls;
- To recognize and support active participation of vulnerable groups such as sex workers and men having sex with men and injecting drug users in policy formulation and prevention programs;
- To adopt Harm Reduction programs for injecting drug users, particularly in light of the growing transmission of HIV through drug use in many Muslim-majority countries.

We urge all UN member countries to support a comprehensive, forward-looking, and ambitious political declaration, and demonstrate active leadership in bringing and combating HIV/AIDS.

**The Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies is a solidarity network of 60 leading NGOs working on promotion of sexual, bodily and reproductive rights as human rights in the Middle East/North Africa and South/Southeast Asia.**

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