

Cyber dialogues summary four HIV AND AIDS

Date: 7 March 2005

Theme: HIV and AIDS

Panelists: Anne Wanjiru (GROOTS, Kenya), Mary Balinkungari (Rwanda Women's Network), Rebecca Schleifer (Human Rights Watch) and Musimbi Kanyoro (YWCA)

Quote for the day: *"If AIDS is not one of the main issues at the CSW then what is the topical issue? Some of us in Africa thought the CSW will give us a strong political space for showing the nexus between poverty, gender inequality and HIV and AIDS!"*

1. HIV and AIDS is not specifically mentioned in the Beijing Paktform for Action and it has not featured significantly at the CSW Beijing +10 Review. What is your view on this?

- HIV/AIDS is not a global concern; rather it is a concern for the global South, and Africa in particular where infection rates amongst women in many countries are high.
- HIV/AIDS is increasingly viewed as a woman's issues as women are greater risk for infection, face obstacles in accessing treatment and bear primary burden of care.
- There is a lack of recognition of the links between HIV/AIDS and rights violation.

2. Women carry the major load of care giving. How can governments recognise this work and help to ease the burden on women?

- For the majority of women, home based care has placed additional burdens on women and girls already responsible for domestic work.
- Building the capacity of women through local-to-local dialogues and peer learning.
- By supplying care givers with the information and supplies required to do this work and ensuring that policies do not make it more difficult to undertaken home based care work.
- Governments should recognise the value of women's home-based care work.
- Governments need to inscribe protections for women's rights in law and policy and recognise that this is an essential part of the response to HIV/AIDS.
- By developing laws, policies and programmes and allocating finances to ensuring that women have an equal right to property and earnings on divorce and as widows, for example, and that they have adequate protections against domestic violence.

3. What are governments doing to stop or halt the spread of HIV/AIDS? How effective is this from women's perspective?

- Unequal power relations have meant that the ABC approach adopted by many governments do not work for many women who are unable to abstain and cannot negotiate condom use as they face violent responses.
- Policies that exist are very often not gender specific and budget allocations also do not take into account specific gendered concerns. The allocation of resources is not responsive to the gendered dimensions of the epidemic.

4. What specific strategies for addressing HIV/AIDS do you want the Beijing +10 conference to take up during this week?

- Gender responsive resource allocation for HIV and AIDS.
- Increased support for basic social services such as health, education, social services, nutrition etc as a long term means of lifting the burden from women.
- Practical and strategic support to women care givers especially grandmothers, girls, women living with HIV and AIDS.
- Raising the profile of issues of gender, conflict and HIV/AIDS.

5. Action points

Responsibility of government

- Governments and donors should protect and promote women's and girls human rights as a central part of the response to HIV/AIDS.
- Governments should partner with communities and channel resources to support women's work on the ground and provide grants or subsidies to those who provide home based care.
- Mandatory provisions for anti-retrovirals and access to the drugs at all government hospitals at all levels.
- Governments should institute gender responsive resource allocation methods for HIV/AIDS.

Awareness raising

- NGOs should popularise the use and availability of PEP.
- Name and shame leaders who are in polygamous relationships.

Policy

- Arrange a policy dialogue for donors on HIV/AIDS in post-conflict areas at a regional and global level either as part of the MDG +5 review or ICASA 2005.
- Obtain and analyse gender disaggregated data and use this as a basis for policy advocacy.

6. Results of the poll question

The majority of people who responded to the poll question felt that PEP has hardly featured in debates about treatment because discussion on anything to do with sexual assault is taboo in most countries. Also, many felt that the link between gender violence and HIV/AIDS is not well understood.

