



The Panama Declaration 2006: "Nothing for Us without Us"

In the framework of the 1st Latin America and Caribbean Congress of Women, Adolescents and Girls and of the 7th Regional Meeting of Women, convened by the Regional Secretariat of the International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW Latina) we, the responsible women of the National Chapters of the 17 countries that currently make up the Latin-American ICW, together with the 242 representatives of 20 of the countries of the region, gathered here in Panama from 16 to 19 October 2006, have unanimously decided to write this Declaration to be presented to the political, social, labour and entrepreneurial leaders, the mass-media and various actors of the most dynamic social bodies of our countries and around the world, in ratification of the 2004 Buenos Aires Declaration.

The ultimate aim of our work is to reach the eyes and ears of the powers that be in order that they carry out the mandate given to us by Mr. Nelson Mandela – a living example of commitment in the fight against AIDS – and who, during the International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, reminded us that mankind is threatened with extinction if, during the near future, we fail to identify a bold, extensive and coordinated course of action in response to the AIDS pandemic.

The path must, absolutely, include People Living with HIV and AIDS working along side the most powerful forces uniting all nations and harmonizing their mutual concern and identities. In particular, this must include women, young girls and adolescents who are the victims of poverty and exclusion, migrant women, women who are heads of household, drug users, sexual workers, refugees, women in confinement and women from indigenous groups who have been able to join the large delegations participating in this, the Panama Congress, all of who recognize the great necessity of defining policies suitable for all concerned sectors.

Therefore, we hereby declare our determination, our commitment to action and our demands in this, The Panama Declaration:

THE PANAMA DECLARATION OF THE LATIN AMERICAN ICW (based on the preliminary reports of the 10 working committees of the Congress which will be integrated into the annexes to the Latin American ICW Report)

We, the women gathered here who are living with HIV and AIDS, propose to fight for the following points and hereby request that:

The United Nations Organization, in the framework of the UNGASS Declaration, duly supports us in our efforts to:

- 1 Ensure full implementation of said Declaration by the Member States.
- 2 Fight to ensure that the MIPA Principal (More Involvement of People Living with HIV and AIDS), is included in national policies in line with the Three Ones.
- 3 Enforce compliance with International Directives on HIV and AIDS.
- 4 Monitor the handling of international funds, giving special attention to the Global Fund, which is in dire need of changing its selection criteria in order to give equal treatment to all countries in the region and to adopt new standards that take into consideration the most vulnerable populations and their needs.
- 5 Fight to ensure that the funds made available by international financial agencies and entities take into consideration the priorities of civil society and those who are applying for and receiving funds over those of the donor community.

We request the States of the region:

- 1 To increase the involvement of the International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (ICW) in the decision-making process, in accordance with the Three Ones and with the pledge made here by the United Nations agencies and UNAIDS toward supporting ICW Latin America in each country for the attainment of these goals.
- 2 To work towards a national framework that enables coordinated action, with political participation and HIV and AIDS programmes in all branches of government, as indicated in the Three Ones strategy.
- 3 To analyze and strengthen sanitary legislation on public health issues, such as those relating to sexual and reproductive health as well as the training of health professionals on AIDS-related themes, with special attention to nutrition and the physical and psychological effects stemming from their neglect by the government.

4 To disseminate or strengthen legislation combating discrimination.

5 To provide legal assistance aimed at helping PLHIV of their rights.

6 To promote specific programmes for women, young people, and other vulnerable groups.

7 To advocate for change in attitudes of discrimination and stigmatization vis à vis the HIV and AIDS pandemic into attitudes of understanding, acceptance and implementation of the CEDAW Protocol in all of our countries in the region.

We hold fast in our support of goals guaranteeing the quality of proven medication for both name brand and generic products for all PLHIV in the region and of universal access to ARV medicine.

We make a special plea to the Coalition of First Ladies and Women Leaders in HIV and AIDS in the region, headed by Ms Xiomara Castro de Zelaya, to adopt the outcome of this Congress and to help us put it into practice.

THE ICW LATIN AMERICA COMMITMENT:

We, the women gathered here, working through our regional organization, the ICW of Latin America, are committed to exert long term political pressure in each of our countries before the entire gamut of international organizations, in order to ensure more dynamic coordination among States, Civil Society and all other decision-makers in the region.

The Regional Secretariat of ICW Latin America takes upon itself the concerns of the National Representatives and the participants of this Congress, specifically, to set up training workshops and other activities aimed at preparing Writers and Editors of the regional press so as to foster a broader and deeper involvement on their part in the dissemination of AIDS-related themes and as part of the strategy for a social response to the pandemic, as well as to promote in each country the creation of specific perimeters needed to address the interests and needs of young girls and adolescents living with HIV, facilitating their genuine participation.

All of the goals stated in this document will be monitored, beginning today through to the end of our 2nd Congress of Women, Young Girls and Adolescents, a Congress that must absolutely take place, hopefully with the unconditional support of all such sister agencies.

In closing:

The Nations of the world, the United Nations, their leaders, both current and future, along with the whole community of each of our countries and globally, are counting on us to work hand in hand with all men, as has been done since the dawn of humanity and which is being done during the AIDS pandemic – to attain these humanitarian and unlimited defense of human rights.

We declare, here in Panama City, which has given us a kind-hearted welcome, that

WE WANT “NOTHING FOR US WITHOUT US”

Regional Secretariat of ICW Latin America, National Representatives of the 17 Regional Chapters and women, young girls, and adolescents living with HIV and AIDS participating in this Congress.

PANAMA, 19 OCTOBER 2006