

Message from the World For World Organization on the occasion of the World AIDS Day, 1 December 2010

“We Urges All to Take Action and Ensure that Human Rights are Protected and Global Targets for HIV/AIDS Prevention for People who have HIV Can Live Free from Discrimination”



On 1 December 2010, WFWO and people from all over the world will commemorate World AIDS Day (WAD) by organizing national and local events that aim to raise more public awareness and a better understanding of HIV/AIDS; to breakdown some of the unwarranted stigma that surrounds HIV; and to mobilize funds for further HIV/AIDS support. The Day will also highlight the critical need for universal access to essential care and promote what has been accomplished in combating this global pandemic.

The theme for World AIDS Day 2010 is *'Universal Access and Human Rights'*. Global leaders have pledged to work towards universal access to HIV and AIDS treatment, prevention and care, recognising these as fundamental human rights. Valuable progress has been made in increasing access to HIV and AIDS services, yet greater commitment is needed around the world if the goal of universal access is to be achieved. Millions of people continue to be infected with HIV every year. In low- and middle-income countries, less than half of those in need of antiretroviral therapy are receiving it, and too many do not have access to adequate care services.

The protection of human rights is fundamental to combating the global HIV and AIDS epidemic. Violations against human rights fuel the spread of HIV, putting marginalised groups, such as injecting drug users and sex workers, at a higher risk of HIV infection. By promoting individual human rights, new infections can be prevented and people who have HIV can live free from discrimination.

World AIDS Day provides an opportunity for all of us - individuals, communities and political leaders - to take action and ensure that human rights are protected and global targets for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care are met. Let us acknowledge the widespread and growing efforts to address this important issue on the HIV/AIDS to achieve our common objectives, WFWO's team and its partners, supporters "Stand Up and continue to support HIV/AIDS prevention and human rights, with its modest contributions to make difference" and to hear their voices.

Today with around 2.6 million people becoming infected with HIV in 2009, there are now an estimated 33.3 million people around the world who are living with HIV, including millions who have developed AIDS.

From 2006 to 2010, an extra three million people in low and middle-income countries were put on treatment for HIV. Access to treatment has greatly expanded, rising by a third from 2008-2009. However, the number of people in need of treatment has also increased due to a 2010 change in WHO guidelines, which recommends starting treatment at an earlier stage. This means that of the 33.3 million people living with HIV worldwide, the number of people in need of treatment has risen from 10 million to 14.6 million. Under the previous guidelines HIV treatment coverage would have increased from 42% in 2008 to 52% in 2009. However, according to the new guidelines, treatment coverage in low and middle-income countries is 36%.

Today, people living with HIV are at the table where policy is made and resources are allocated. They have instilled the notion that universal access to HIV prevention, treatment care and support is not a luxury but it is a right, and it is time to make it a reality for every human being. This has changed the way people worldwide - even those affected by other diseases and issues - view and approach their own health and demand their rights.

The WFWO and its local NGOs and CBOs partners in field is taken a concrete action to provide HIV prevention to support local communities in remote rural areas. We also raise public awareness to call attention to all countries to keep their commitments to contribute to make it a reality and to achieve the MDGs targets, this more critical than ever. Only with solidarity of all the leadership role of United Nations family and government and NGOs can we take AIDS out of isolation and fully integrate the AIDS response with the MDGs. HIV is not a disease in isolation. It has shown us the fault lines in society. It is part of the global fabric of human health, human rights and human livelihoods. MDGs 3, 4, 5 and 6 are one indivisible set. It is time to harness the capacity and passion and expertise built over the last 30 years of the global AIDS response to achieve these broader health and development Goals, if not we will not achieve the MDGs by 2015.

WFWO's Communications Team