

PRESS RELEASE

UNAIDS urges everyone to make some noise for zero discrimination

GENEVA, 23 February 2017—Everyone will have experienced discrimination of some kind during their lives; however, non-discrimination is a human right. Equally, states and individuals have a legal obligation not to discriminate. This year, on 1 March, Zero Discrimination Day, UNAIDS is urging people to make some noise around zero discrimination, to speak up and prevent discrimination from standing in the way of achieving ambitions, goals and dreams.

Discrimination has many forms, from racial or religious discrimination to discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation or age, and to bullying at school or at work. In only three out of 10 countries worldwide do equal numbers of girls and boys attend upper secondary school, and people living with disabilities are nearly three times more likely to be denied health care than other people.

“Everyone has the right to be treated with respect, to live free from discrimination, coercion and abuse,” said Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS. “Discrimination doesn’t just hurt individuals, it hurts everyone, whereas welcoming and embracing diversity in all its forms brings benefits for all.”

Zero discrimination is an integral part of UNAIDS’ vision and for this year’s Zero Discrimination Day UNAIDS is calling for zero discrimination in health-care settings. The right to health is a fundamental human right that includes access to affordable, timely and quality health-care services for all, yet discrimination remains widespread in health-care settings, creating a serious barrier to access to HIV services.

“Health-care settings should be safe and supportive environments. It is unacceptable that discrimination is inhibiting access to care today,” said Mr Sidibé. “Eliminating discrimination in health-care settings is critical, and we must demand that it become a reality.”

Data from 50 countries from the People Living with HIV Stigma Index show that one in eight people living with HIV report being denied health care. Around 60% of European Union/European Economic Area countries report that stigma and discrimination among health-care professionals remains a barrier to the provision of adequate HIV prevention services for men who have sex with men and people who inject drugs.

This year, UNAIDS is calling on everyone to make some noise for #zerodiscrimination. Zero Discrimination Day is an opportunity to highlight how everyone can be part of the transformation and take a stand for a fair and just society.

Find out more at unaids.org

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UNAIDS

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) leads and inspires the world to achieve its shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. UNAIDS unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank—and works closely with global and national partners towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Learn more at unaids.org and connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.