

## 2008 High-Level Meeting on AIDS (HLM) Civil Society Participation Information Note

(Please check [www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org) and [www.ungasshiv.org](http://www.ungasshiv.org) for further information)

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### INTRODUCTION

The United Nations welcome civil society organization participants to the 2008 High-Level Meeting on AIDS. The meeting sets out to review the progress and reaffirm commitment to decisive action on AIDS and towards realising the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS.

One of the major objectives outlined in the General Assembly's Resolution A/RES/62/178 adopted by Member States in December 2007 that describes the 2008 High-Level Meeting is for the meeting to ensure active participation of civil society.

More than 1700 individuals from civil society have been accredited or have pre-registered to attend the meeting. On 29 April 2008, almost 700 civil society organizations received special accreditation by UN Member States to attend the HLM. ECOSOC-accredited organizations pre-registered more than 400 individuals. In addition many national delegations include representatives of civil society and people living with HIV.

As in 2006, the decision by UN Member States to accommodate such a high number of organizations confirms the commitment from many corners of the world to work on AIDS across sectors and in partnership. The 2008 HLM promises a continued involvement for civil society, including presentation slots in plenary and panel sessions, as well as in an interactive civil society hearing.

To best understand the arrangements for the meeting this document should be read together with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Information note from the Office of the President of the General Assembly (15 May 2008) which provides details of the formal events, times, locations and formats. These are found on the UNAIDS web pages through the following links:

<http://www.unaids.org/en/Conferences/2008HLM/default.asp>

[http://data.unaids.org/pub/BaseDocument/2008/a-res-62-178\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/BaseDocument/2008/a-res-62-178_en.pdf)

<http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/letters/letterBackground150508.pdf>

### CIVIL SOCIETY TASK FORCE

In February 2008 the President of the UN General Assembly convened a Task Force of 12 civil society representatives to help ensure effective and active participation of civil society in the 2008 High-Level Meeting on AIDS.

Individuals were selected for the Task Force following a call for nominations and a transparent selection process managed by a consortium of civil society organizations, led by the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO) and the International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC), in collaboration with UNAIDS. This

consortium (Civil Society Support Mechanism) was contracted by UNAIDS to support civil society engagement in national reporting processes and the High-Level Meeting.

The Task Force leads on:

- Shaping and implementing the design for the Civil Society Hearing on the first day of the High-Level Meeting including format, topics, messages and speakers
- Devising criteria and the call for nominations for civil society speakers
- Identifying, preparing and briefing civil society speakers for all formal sessions
- Briefing civil society participants on the High-Level Meeting.

The Task Force advises on:

- Issues related to accreditation and attendance by civil society representatives
- The themes of the panel discussions
- Civil society participation in the panel discussions
- Proposed civil society plenary speakers
- Recommendations to the chairs of the panel discussions
- Input into the development of key messages for the Review meeting to be used by UNAIDS for media and communications opportunities
- Advising on logistical issues and needs for civil society attending

The members of the Task Force are:

- Claudia Ahumada, Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights/World AIDS Campaign
- Elina Azaryan, East European and Central Asian Union of PLHIV/ICW
- Robert Carr, Global Forum on MSM and HIV/ Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition
- Syed Asif Altaf Chowdhury, International Transport Worker's Federation
- Vincent Crisostomo, Seven Sisters (Coalition of Asia Pacific Regional Networks on HIV/AIDS)
- Stijn Goossens, International Network of People Who Use Drugs
- Linda Hartke, Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance
- Laxmi Narayan Tripathi, Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers
- Zonibel Woods, International Women's Health Coalition
- Rolake Odetoyinbo, Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS
- Lillian Mworeko, International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS
- Neeraj Mistry, Global Business Coalition
- Co-Chair: Kieran Daly, International Council of AIDS Service Organizations, on behalf of the Civil Society Support Mechanism
- Co-Chair: Kate Thomson, UNAIDS

## RESTRICTIONS DUE TO CAPACITY AND SECURITY CONCERNS

Due to the large numbers of both government delegations and civil society organizations participating in the 2008 High-Level Meeting on AIDS, access to certain meeting rooms will be restricted for space and security reasons. Please note that access will be managed through registration, passes and tickets – described in the next section. Due to space limitations there will be no guarantee that all civil society participants will be able to gain access to meeting rooms.

Please note that this arrangement means that ECOSOC-accredited organizations with year-long ECOSOC passes will be able to access restricted rooms on the basis of special tickets.

Conference Room 1 will serve as the “overflow room” to enable participants to follow proceedings of the opening plenary meeting, the informal interactive civil society hearing, and panel discussions.

The plenary meetings, the informal interactive civil society hearing and the panel discussions will be transmitted by live web-cast. This will be accessible from the front page of the UNAIDS website.

## GROUND PASSES FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ACCESS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Civil society representatives may pick up their UN ground passes at the Visitor’s Lobby of the United Nations Secretariat in New York (First Avenue and 46<sup>th</sup> Street). The United Nations ground passes are to be worn visibly at all times.

Civil society representatives should enter the UN via the Visitor’s Entrance (First Avenue and 46<sup>th</sup> Street) at all times, and will be required to pass through the security scanners. The ground passes will be valid for the days of the meeting and related side-events only (9-12 June 2008).

The civil society registration desk will be located under the Foucault’s Pendulum in the Visitor’s Lobby. A pass will be issued to each participant. The pass will be issued only once and cannot be replaced in the event of loss. The Registration Desk will be open on:

- Sunday 8 June 1.00 pm - 4.30 pm
- Monday 9 June 8:00 am – 4:30 pm
- Tuesday 10 June 8.00 am - 4:30 pm
- Wednesday 11 June 9.00 am – 1.00 pm.

Accredited, pre-registered representatives and speakers are strongly encouraged to register on 8 June to avoid queues.

Registration will take place at five computer terminals. One terminal will give priority to speakers, alternates and active participants; a notice will be displayed above the line.

Civil society representatives will need to present their letter of invitation and a valid passport or photo-ID card, at the Registration Desk (Please be advised that the Security, in line with the UN policy, will not accept any identification from Taiwan). No pass will be issued without the presentation of both of these documents. The name on the letter of invitation must match the name on the identification document.

Registration staff will confirm the participant's information and then complete and print a security form. This form should then be presented to security staff who will take a photo and issue a UN ground pass. Security will also require all participants to provide emergency contact information (name, address, telephone number and/or email address) during registration.

Volunteers, from different language groups, will be on hand to help with registration and support to civil society delegates.

#### BE PREPARED TO QUEUE OUTSIDE

Please note that there will be long queues for registration which might stretch outside. Check the weather reports and bring either umbrellas or sun screen. Also bring water as it might be difficult to leave the queue and come back. Long queues for registration can be frustrating. Rest assured that the people staffing the registration will do what they can to make it as smooth as possible, within the security constraints. Do not hesitate to contact them about registration procedures and the volunteers on other issues. The volunteers are there to ensure that you get to the right places at the right time and will be able to direct you and give useful information.

#### ACCESS TO PLENARY SESSIONS, CIVIL SOCIETY HEARING AND PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Many ECOSOC NGOs already have a regular badge that normally allows them to access the UN building, including the Conference Rooms, galleries of the meeting rooms with restricted access (i.e. GA Hall, ECOSOC Chamber and Trusteeship Council) and the exhibition area. However, this will not be the case during the High-Level Meeting; because of capacity constraints special tickets will be distributed to participants with valid ground passes and badges on a first-come-first-serve basis.

There will be colour-coded passes for speakers for the opening plenary, the civil society hearing and the panel discussions to enter the main floor of the meeting rooms.

Access for all other civil society representatives will be limited as follows: plenary meetings – through the Gallery of the GA Hall; Civil society hearing – through the Gallery of Conference room 4 and limited access to the main floor (tbc); and panel discussions through the Gallery of Conference room 4, which will be on the basis of special tickets.

A limited number of tickets will be made available on each of the registration days. These tickets will be distributed from a designated table in the Visitors lobby on a first-come first-served basis to individual pass-holders (from 8am on Tuesday 10 June and from 9am Wednesday 11 June 2008 for the morning sessions, and from 2pm on both days for the afternoon sessions). Since seats are limited, only one ticket will be issued per registrant. Each ticket will be valid for only one session.

## OVERFLOW ROOM

To accommodate those who do not have access to the plenary meetings, Civil Society Hearing and Panel Discussions, Conference Room 1 will be used as an overflow room, open to both delegates and civil society representatives. The overflow room will provide an opportunity to observe the proceedings through a video monitor. Seating in the overflow room is open to all pass holders on a first-come first-served basis.

## CIVIL SOCIETY OPENING PLENARY SPEAKER

Following an open process of nominations, the Civil Society Task Force selected Ms. Ratri Suksma of CARAM Asia Berhad, a woman living with HIV from Indonesia who is living and working with migrants in Malaysia, as the civil society speaker at the Opening Plenary. Ms. Stephanie Raper of the People Living with HIV Speakers Bureau, an HIV-positive youth from Australia is the alternate Opening Plenary speaker representing civil society.

## CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION IN PANELS

Civil society delegates who were proposed by the Task Force following the open process of nominations have been selected to make presentations in each of the five panel discussions. Those are described in the Information note issued by the Office of the President of the General Assembly available at:

<http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/letters/letterBackground150508.pdf>

Each Panel discussion will include an interactive Q&A session, during which (with the exception of civil society participants who may be speaking as members of government delegations) only civil society representatives pre-selected by the Task Force can participate. These civil society delegates will be seated in a designated area and will be expected to keep their interventions brief, exceeding no more than three minutes.

## CIVIL SOCIETY HEARING

A two hour informal civil society hearing, with the theme of Action For Universal Access 2010: Myths and Realities, is scheduled on 10 June at 11am in Conference Room 4. This will include remarks by the President of the General Assembly who will chair the session and remarks by the UN Secretary-General. A civil society representative will then make opening remarks on the theme of the Hearing and on HIV and Human Rights. Following this, there will be 11 four-minute interventions from civil society speakers, pre-selected by the Task Force, on the following themes: Sex Workers and HIV; Rights of Sexual Minorities; People who use drugs; Women and Girls; Children and HIV; Young people living with HIV; Access to Treatment; HIV-related Travel Restrictions, Mobility and Migration; Workplace Responses, and; Civil Society Involvement and AIDS Accountability.

The session will then open up for interactions between civil society representatives, pre-selected by the Task Force, and member states. A civil society speaker will deliver concluding remarks.

## ORIENTATION AND BRIEFING FOR CIVIL SOCIETY PRESENTERS

An orientation, coaching and rehearsal for the selected civil society speakers and alternates only will be offered at a special session to be lead by the Civil Society Task Force on 8<sup>th</sup> June from 9.00 to 18.00. The venue is Labouisse Hall in the UNICEF building basement (East 44<sup>th</sup> Street, between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenues).

Members of the Civil Society Task Force and UN staff will provide an orientation for logistical matters that are specific to the speakers and offer an overview of civil society interventions and presentations throughout the High-Level Meeting. There will also be advice on how to maximize the impact of presentations and work with the media, and a structured dry run of all presentations.

## CIVIL SOCIETY ORIENTATION AND CAUCUS MEETING

A Civil Society Orientation and Caucus meeting will take place on 9 June from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00p.m. in Conference Room 1.

The meeting will be run for and by civil society – on behalf of the Task Force through the Civil Society Support Mechanism. The meeting is open to civil society representatives attending the High-Level Meeting, both as part of civil society and government delegations. It will focus on:

- An orientation to assist civil society to engage effectively in the High-Level Meeting
- As a space for regional and issue-based caucuses to discuss civil society involvement and outcomes of national review processes.

To access Conference Room 1, participants must have registered and received their ground pass to enter the building, please allocate time for registration accordingly.

The plenary portions of this meeting will be conducted in English, with some whisper translation available for those who need it.

For further information about this meeting email: [universalaccess2010@icaso.org](mailto:universalaccess2010@icaso.org)

## CIVIL SOCIETY CAUCUS ROOM

UN Conference Room B has been reserved for civil society representatives to hold caucuses and meetings throughout the High-Level Meeting. A photocopier and a printer (for use with personal lap-tops) have been set up in that room for the use of civil society representatives attending the High-Level Meeting. Civil society representatives are requested to bring their own paper for the photocopier and printer in letter size (American size) since any other size will jam the machines. Please do not use the photocopier, computers and printers while the room is being used for caucuses and workshops.

Wi-fi is available in the UN building in almost all areas. It is not available in Conference Room 4.

There will be a message board on the wall in the caucus room, as well as a place to post announcements and press releases and stories.

A schedule of events to take place in the Caucus Room will be posted on the notice board inside Conference room B. A daily schedule of events will be distributed at the registration desk and at the morning briefings in Conference room 1. Only those scheduling changes received by 1:00 pm each day will be reflected in the next day's schedule.

Marcelle Rin of UNAIDS will keep a booking system for the room and can be contacted on [rinm@unaid.org](mailto:rinm@unaid.org). Volunteers will also be on duty in the caucus room to answer questions and provide assistance.

#### DAILY BRIEFINGS ORGANIZED BY THE CIVIL SOCIETY TASK FORCE

There will be Daily Briefings for civil society participants on 10 and 11 June, in Conference Room 1, from 8:15 to 8:45 a.m. on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 8.30 to 9.30 a.m. on the 11<sup>th</sup>, and evening debriefings from 6:00 p.m. on both days.

#### TIMING

Individuals facilitating workshops or co-organizing events on UN premises are requested to keep strictly to the scheduled time so that the next programme may start promptly. Likewise, the daily morning briefing must end promptly at 8:45 a.m and the room cleared in time for the next meeting. Any lunchtime events must end promptly at 2:45 pm.

#### DOCUMENTS

Participant packets containing the program and official documents for the High-Level Meeting have been prepared and will be distributed at registration. Civil society representatives are requested to take only one copy of the registration packet per participant. Delegates are requested not to ask for official documents at the documentation booths in the Conference Room area, as distribution of documents to civil society delegates in these areas is not authorised.

#### HIV POSITIVE PARTICIPANTS AND TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES

Laws in the United States restrict entry for people living with HIV on the grounds that people living with HIV are considered to have "a communicable disease of public health significance."

The law can be relaxed in some circumstances and allow entry for specific events such as the High Level Meeting on AIDS. Special arrangements have been made to relax entry restrictions for this meeting however people living with HIV are still urged to find out as much information in advance of traveling to the United States.

To enable delegates living with HIV to participate, the U.S. Government has declared the High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS a "designated event." This allows waivers of inadmissibility to be granted at a local U.S. Embassy or Consulate, to those participants of the High-Level Meeting, who are living with HIV.

Any person living with HIV who experiences difficulties while entering the US is encouraged to contact Vishal Trivedi at Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) at 212 367 1308; or Debo Tinubu at 212 367 1254, independent legal advisers for civil society attending the High-Level Meeting.

## LOUNGE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

A lounge will be available for people living with HIV to use on 9-11 June. There will be comfortable seating and a rest area. Light refreshments will also be available. Volunteers will be based in the lounge at all times to assist participants with problems and to ensure an HIV-only door policy is maintained. The Express bar has been reserved for people living with HIV only and all participants are requested to respect this.

## MEDICAL SERVICES

UN medical services will offer an on-site first aid clinic. In addition, participants will be able to access medical services at Bellevue Hospital which is a short distance from the UN. More details can be obtained from the Civil Society Partnerships team and an information sheet will be available at registration and in the PLHIV lounge.

Details of syringe exchange locations and hours can be found at <http://www.harmreduction.org/resources/usnep/newyork/NYC.html>.

All participants requiring access to methadone should bring a valid prescription from their qualified medical practitioner.

## INFORMATION FOR VISITORS TO NEW YORK and the UN

June is a good month to visit New York with comfortable temperatures. Visitors are still advised to pack an umbrella and carry a light sweater or jacket as evenings can be cool. May Weather: Average High: 71°F (22°C) Average Low: 55°F (13°C)

Please note that all civil society representatives are responsible for their own expenses, visas, accommodation, transport, meals, health insurance, etc.; financial support is being provided to only a limited number of persons who are serving as speakers and alternates.

## Tips for when visiting the UN

Language usage in UN meetings:

Generally, it is expected that all participants at UN meetings respect the formal nature of such events, listen respectfully to what is being said on the floor by presenters or other participants, and use polite and respectful language, speaking diplomatically and respectfully to and about one another.



Naming Member States:

It is a longstanding UN custom that, except in praise or a neutral reference, the country of a particular Member or Observer State is not named publicly to blame or criticize them during the meeting. Instead, if something negative is to be said, it is done diplomatically, couched in more general terms in a way that most everyone understands which country (or countries) is meant without using the specific name. The same diplomatic respect is afforded to NGOs.

For more information on how the UN works we suggest you read the UN-NGLS publication: Intergovernmental negotiations and decision making at the United Nations available online at: [http://www.un-ngls.org/site/article.php3?id\\_article=61](http://www.un-ngls.org/site/article.php3?id_article=61)

On arrival in New York

Please note you will not be met at the airport.

It is unsafe to accept a ride from drivers who approach you at the airport. Even if they look official, they are breaking the law. Ignore offers of transportation from anyone in the terminal. Go to ground transportation information counters, bus stops, and taxi dispatchers for safe and legitimate transportation. Ignore non-uniformed persons offering to assist with baggage. Seek out uniformed porters or airline employees for baggage assistance.

Yellow cabs are available at a fixed rate of \$50 (including tolls) from JFK into Manhattan. The cost from Newark is slightly higher. There are also airport buses that take passengers to/from the JFK airport, Newark Liberty airport and LaGuardia airport, (the cost is much lower than limos and yellow cabs).

The bus stop in New York City for JFK is on Park Avenue between 42nd & 41st Streets), the one for Newark Liberty Airport is on 40th (between 3rd and Lexington Avenues).

The bus option is good if passenger does not have large pieces of luggage.

For information on transport in and around New York

<http://www.panynj.gov/>

<http://www.nycsubway.org/maps/>

<http://manhattan.about.com/od/gettingaround/>

For visitor information on New York

<http://www.nycvisit.com/home/>

#### IMPORTANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The following links offer essential background information for civil society representatives planning to take part in the High-Level Meeting.

List of pre-registered ECOSOC accredited civil society participants:

<http://www.un-ngls.org/unaid/docs/ecosoc.pdf>

List of accredited civil society organizations:

[http://data.unaids.org/pub/BaseDocument/2008/20080423\\_HLM\\_CivilSociety\\_a62crp1\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/BaseDocument/2008/20080423_HLM_CivilSociety_a62crp1_en.pdf)

Organizational notes issued by the Office of the President of the General Assembly:

<http://www.unaids.org/en/Conferences/2008HLM/default.asp>

<http://www.un.org/ga/aidsmeeting2008/>

[http://data.unaids.org/pub/BaseDocument/2008/a-res-62-178\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/BaseDocument/2008/a-res-62-178_en.pdf)

<http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/letters/letter110408.pdf>

<http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/issues/HLMonHIV.shtml>

<http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/letters/letterBackground150508.pdf>

National reports (by country) and shadow reports by civil society:

<http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/HIVData/CountryProgress/2007CountryProgressAllCountries.asp>

<http://www.icaso.org/ungass.html>

[http://www.icaso.org/shadow\\_reports.html](http://www.icaso.org/shadow_reports.html)

Information note for people living with HIV travelling to the United States:

[http://travel.state.gov/visa/laws/telegrams/telegrams\\_1446.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/laws/telegrams/telegrams_1446.html)

[http://www.gmhc.org/programs/legal/immig\\_meeting08.pdf](http://www.gmhc.org/programs/legal/immig_meeting08.pdf)

Secretary General's Report:

<http://www.un.org/ga/aidsmeeting2008/>

Other events of interest for civil society can be found in the calendar of side events:

[http://www.un.org/ga/aidsmeeting2008/calendar\\_hlm\\_sideevents.pdf](http://www.un.org/ga/aidsmeeting2008/calendar_hlm_sideevents.pdf)

## UNAIDS FOCAL POINTS

The following UNAIDS staff will be present throughout the High-Level Meeting to support civil society:

Kate Thomson: Overall coordination and Co-Chair Task Force +1 917 348 2046

Sally Smith: Support to speakers +1 646 361 2920

Eric Sawyer: Support to PLHIV +1 917 379 6948

Marcelle Rin: Logistics, Registration and Admin support +1 646 623 7453

Pauline Muchina: Coordination of volunteers +1 202 2944 682

For any enquiries on arrival in New York please call the New York cell phones of the UNAIDS Civil Society Partnerships Team above or the office landline +1 212 867 8665/8266

The team can be reached by e-mail up until 3 June on [csp@unaids.org](mailto:csp@unaids.org)