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Press Release



Commemorating World AIDS Day - Leadership Awards that celebrated emerging leadership and saluted the established

New Delhi (November 30, 2016): In observance of World AIDS Day 2016 on December 1st, India HIV/AIDS Alliance, with the partnership of National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), UNDP and UNAIDS organized a Leadership Awards to recognize advocates and leaders from communities affected by HIV/AIDS, who have worked intensively in strengthening the nation's HIV response.

India has made some remarkable progress in addressing the epidemic in the country. Not only has India been able to substantially reduce the incidence of HIV but has been successful in taking care of those who are infected and affected, dramatically decreasing the morbidity and mortality due to it. This outstanding result has been due to the relentless work done by many stakeholders under the leadership of NACO, Government of India that include but not limited to people living with or most affected by HIV, some of the most vulnerable communities, civil society, academic institutes and international bodies.

Every year, World AIDS Day is held on the 1st December and is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with and most affected by HIV, and to commemorate people who have died. The theme of World AIDS Day 2016 is "Leadership, Commitment and Impact".

Keeping with the theme, India HIV/AIDS Alliance recognizes change-makers and leaders whose pioneering work has contributed to a robust HIV response specifically in the last 5 years, and have helped strengthen access to rights of LGBT communities, Sex Workers (SW), People Who Inject Drugs (PWID), People Living with HIV (PLHIV) and young population communities across the HIV programs in India.

Prominent HIV activist and the President of NCPI+ **Daxa Patel** stated, "It is the right of every person living with HIV to avail the best treatment, care and support services. India has had free antiretroviral treatment since 2004. We thank each one of us who have worked towards making this a possibility. Much more needs to be done! India is facing ongoing challenges such as stock-outs of drugs and other commodities. We need access to third-line treatment and viral load testing. It is crucial that we continue to work together and build the second-line leadership to address these issues."

"In 2004, the Government of India started establishing Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART) centers providing free ART drugs to PLHIV which has now scaled up to 520 ART centers all across India. Nearly a million people living with HIV are availing free ART medicines. This has been possible due to the energy and support of the communities living with and affected by HIV", **Dr. C.V. Dharma Rao**, Joint Secretary, National AIDS Control Organization. He jokingly added, "I wish some of this energy also gets into government system".

Oussama Tawil, UNAIDS – India Country Director, reiterated the message by Michele Sidibe, Executive Director of UNAIDS, Under-Secretary General of the UN, saying, "We stand in solidarity with the 78 million people living with HIV, and remember the 35 million who have died from AIDS related illnesses."

"As a community leader taught me early in my work on HIV – we are part of the solution not part of the problem, we are faces of your success not your failure" shared **Sonal Mehta**, Chief Executive of India HIV/AIDS Alliance as she welcomed the participants on the eve of World AIDS Day.

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About India HIV/AIDS Alliance

Founded in 1999, India HIV/AIDS Alliance is a non-governmental organisation operating in partnership with civil society, government and communities to support sustained responses to HIV in India that protect rights and improve health. Complementing the Indian national programme, we build capacity, provide technical support and advocate to strengthen the delivery of effective, innovative, community-based HIV programmes to vulnerable populations affected by the epidemic.

For more information, visit:

Websites:

<http://www.allianceindia.org/>

<http://www.ncpiplus.net/>

<http://www.endaidsindia.org/>

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