Press Release
10th December 2016

We Count – Standing up for those that matter

New Delhi.

“These are difficult times for human rights. There is no action that is too small: wherever you are, you can make a difference. Together, let’s take a stand for more humanity.”

-- Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Today on the 78th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights celebrated every year on the 10th of December as International Human Rights day, India has a commitment to fulfill towards vulnerable and marginalized communities.

Human rights are inherent and universal in nature, and the realization of these rights are closely guarded by the law.

Continuing with the 2014 campaign, ‘Do we count?’ India HIV/AIDS Alliance highlights the importance of including marginalized groups especially among communities most affected by HIV, such as female sex workers, men who have sex with men, people who inject drugs, transgender and Hijras in protection and promotion of human rights. In case of female sex workers the Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act (ITPA), men who have sex with men, Transgender and Hijra – section 377a and for people who inject drugs – the NDPS Act are often in conflict with human rights.

Sonal Mehta, Chief Executive, India HIV/AIDS Alliance emphasized that “Violation of human rights and fear of prosecution is one of the biggest drivers of the HIV epidemic that seriously undermines the reach and ability of individuals to take ownership of their own lives, to be able to access services as well as demand services.” She went on to say that “Like the rest of the world we too must take concrete steps in protecting and promoting human rights for all.”

The Transgender bill recognizing the third gender in India is a perfect example of government taking steps in ensuring human and health rights are enshrined and realized. However, the reading down of section 377 by the Delhi High Court which was reversed by the Supreme Court, standing discourse on ITPA and the long pending HIV/AIDS bill in parliament unfortunately regress the successes achieved,” said Simran Sheikh a transgender activist with Alliance India.

The HIV response globally as well as in India, is a prime example of the fact the when human rights are embedded and are the core of programme, it leads to long term substantial gains. However, what it also highlights that it had to take an epidemic of global proportion, where millions had to perish to focus on the inequalities that exist and put individuals affiliated to certain communities or behaviours extremely vulnerable to HIV.

“This human rights day, in line with our mission statement, ‘to support community action to prevent HIV infection, meet the challenges of AIDS, and build healthier communities’, India HIV/AIDS Alliance stands with the communities at risk, re-committing to support the human rights, and appeal to the larger society and Government to come forward and stand with us in this mission” urged Ms Mehta.
About India HIV/AIDS Alliance:

India HIV/AIDS Alliance (Alliance India) is a diverse partnership that brings together committed organisations and communities to support a sustained response to HIV in India. Complementing the national programme in India, the organisation works through capacity building, knowledge sharing, technical support and advocacy. Through our network of partners, Alliance India supports the delivery of effective, innovative, community-based HIV programmes to key groups affected by the epidemic.

For more information, visit:

Website: http://www.allianceindia.org/
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