

[Circulated on LGBTI_health_africa@yahoogroups.com, October 16, 2008]

Dear colleagues,

Southern Africa HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service (SAfAIDS) with support from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) and Health and Development Networks (HDN) are delighted to invite you to write and/or participate in the Accelerating- Prevention electronic discussion forum (eForum) focusing on “Criminalisation of HIV transmission”.

You are invited to this discussion where you can participate in two ways:

1. Write a key paper of 500 - 1 000 words on Criminalisation of HIV transmission in East and southern Africa. The thematic focus of the paper should be on the legitimacy or illegitimacy of criminalisation of HIV transmission in your own perspective. An honorarium will be given to those who write successful key papers for the e-discussion on criminalisation of HIV transmission. The deadline for submission of a key paper is Thursday 23 October 2008.
2. Write and/or participate as a key discussant in the discussion by coming in with your own views and comments to issues raised by members of the eForum. An honorarium will also be given to key discussants based on their participation, involvement and guidance in the e-discussion.

Background to the Discussion

On the 29th of September 2008, SAfAIDS held a regional learning and sharing event on the feedback from the International AIDS Conference held in Mexico in August 2008 at the Harare International Conference Centre. SAfAIDS Executive Director Lois Chingandu presented a paper from the conference entitled “*HIV is a virus, not a crime: Criminal statutes and criminal prosecutions*” which is written by Justice Edwin Cameron with Scott Burris and Michaela Clayton. The key highlight was the argument that, “There is no evidence that criminal laws to HIV transmission will make any significant impact on the spread of HIV or halting the epidemic. Therefore, priority must be given to increasing access to comprehensive and evidence informed prevention methods in the fight against HIV/AIDS.”

The argument created a lot of debate with participants failing to reach a consensus on whether it is right or wrong to criminalise HIV transmission. Against this background, SAfAIDS has decided to take the discussion to an online platform for further discussion on the Accelerating- Prevention eForum.

The key issues and recommendations emerging from the discussion will be packaged into a booklet at the end of the discussion and all contributions and contributors will be duly acknowledged. The topic on Criminalisation of HIV transmission is expected to run for

one month (or more) from mid October 2008. After this topic, the eForum shall be focusing on other 'hot topics' on HIV and AIDS.

About the Accelerating- Prevention eForum

The Accelerating- Prevention is a regional, time-limited eForum aimed at stimulating lively exchange and constructive dialogue on topical HIV prevention issues in Eastern and southern Africa. It was launched in April 2007 and was scheduled to run for an initial period of 6 months. Due to the overwhelming and exciting discussions that took place, the eForum is now being continued. Notable Prevention topics discussed on the eForum include:

- Multiple Concurrent Partnerships
- Male Circumcision
- Strategic Condom Programming
- Positive Prevention
- Role of Men
- Intergenerational Sex
- Let's Talk About Sex
- Sideline in Prevention: Lesbians, Gays, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI)
- HIV and Disability
- Criminalisation of HIV [next discussion topic]

If you are interested in participating send a blank email to:

join-accelerating-prevention@forums.healthdev.org or visit the website at:

www.healthdev.org/forums/accelerating-prevention You can also join the eForum from the website. The website also offers an archive section where you can see all the postings on the previous and current discussions.

Please feel free to distribute this invitation to other organisations and individuals within your networks.

We look forward to your participation! !

Warm regards,

Kevin Mazorodze

WebMaster

SAfAIDS

17 Beveridge Road, Avondale

Harare, Zimbabwe

Tel: +263-4-336193- 4, 307898

Fax; +263-4-336195

Email: kevin@saf aids. org. zw

Web: <http://www.saf aids. net>