



# AIDS Advocacy Alert



## Monitoring the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS Take Action Now Use the *Guidelines on Construction of Core Indicators*

Prepared by the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO)

April 2009

UNAIDS recently launched the *Guidelines on Construction of Core Indicators for 2010 Reporting*.<sup>1</sup> The guidelines (only available in English at the moment) offer a guide to monitoring progress made towards the goals set on the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS.

The UNGASS Declaration of Commitment (DoC) on HIV/AIDS<sup>2</sup>, adopted by UN member states in 2001, provides a comprehensive framework to halt and reverse the AIDS epidemic by 2010. Every two years, governments report on progress made towards achieving these goals. In addition, as part of the review on progress in 2006, UN Member States made further commitments through the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS<sup>3</sup> to scale up the response to the HIV epidemic in reaching universal access to comprehensive prevention programs, treatment, care and support by 2010.

The process to review progress on the implementation of the DoC is an opportunity to measure the effectiveness of national AIDS responses. **The deadline for submitting country progress reports is March 31, 2010.** These reports should reflect reviews and input from all national stakeholders, including the community sector, in what UNAIDS calls the "joint responsibility" of national reporting. However, community sector groups - and particularly key populations- are often not adequately involved, or even excluded from these processes.

ICASO has supported community sector groups in different countries in their involvement in the review and reporting processes.<sup>4</sup> This involvement has been varied: in some countries the participation and engagement was meaningful, whereas in others, there was no involvement at all.

The quality of the reports, and how complete they were, also varied. Less than half of the countries that stated that the indicators on most-at-risk populations were relevant to their epidemic and response, were able to provide data on these indicators. During the 2007 - 2008 review, ICASO found that:

*The continued lack of appropriate indicators and data collection related to key populations most relevant to the dynamics of the epidemics, especially on human rights and legal protections, remain a fundamental barrier to monitoring progress in implementing the commitments.*

*Additionally, the quality of the national progress reports often reflect the quality and quantity of inputs from key stakeholders - the exclusion or tokenistic involvement of the community sector in many countries put into question the validity of these countries' progress reports.*

1. [http://www.icaso.org/resources/2009/2009\\_UNGASScoreindicators2009\\_en.pdf](http://www.icaso.org/resources/2009/2009_UNGASScoreindicators2009_en.pdf)

2. [http://www.icaso.org/resources/UNGASS\\_DoC.pdf](http://www.icaso.org/resources/UNGASS_DoC.pdf)

3. [http://www.icaso.org/resources/20060615\\_HLM\\_PoliticalDeclaration\\_ARES60262\\_en.pdf](http://www.icaso.org/resources/20060615_HLM_PoliticalDeclaration_ARES60262_en.pdf)

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

*There remain multiple and significant barriers to the full and meaningful involvement of the community sector. This includes lack of access to information and official systems to support involvement, and lack of support to strengthen community systems.*

As more countries are submitting reports (55 percent in 2003; 72 percent in 2006; and 80 percent in 2008), it is expected that the community sector will have a more important role to play. It is therefore important that these groups start planning their engagement now, particularly to address the issues mentioned above.

There are **10 Key Actions** that community sector groups can take now to ensure meaningful involvement in all aspects and stages of the review and reporting process, in time for the **March 31, 2010 deadline** to submit the country progress reports.

## 10 Key Actions You Can Now Take

1. Mobilize your community sector colleagues and partner organizations to advocate for the meaningful involvement of the community sector in the review and reporting processes.<sup>5</sup> Establish an UNGASS working group (or similar) within your organization or network and encourage your colleagues to actively engage.
2. Ask the UNAIDS Country Coordinator (UCC) in your country what the UNAIDS country office is doing to facilitate input from the community sector throughout the DoC review process. Reporting is the joint responsibility of all national stakeholders. Request that UNAIDS facilitates an inclusive and participatory process among all stakeholders, including in the review, reporting and validation stages. A list of the UCCs is available by emailing [universalaccess2010@icaso.org](mailto:universalaccess2010@icaso.org)
3. Contact the National AIDS Program (or its equivalent) and ask about the plans to involve the community sector in the UNGASS review and reporting process. Find out who in your country will be leading the preparation of the report and try to arrange a meeting with that person. Support them in developing and publishing a calendar of action and a budget, mapping out key milestones for consultation with the community sector. The review process and report preparation should involve meetings with all national stakeholders, including for validating the report. You could use or adapt the "sample" letter provided.
4. Review the Guidelines on Construction of Core Indicators. Note that the indicators have not changed from the previous reporting period, but that the Guidelines provide more details about measurement and analysis, as well as details about the actual submission process of the report.
5. Analyze the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment, the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the different reports that your government has prepared in the past.<sup>6</sup>
6. Review in particular the 2007-2008 country progress report that your country submitted given that the indicators for 2009-2010 have not changed. Determine if the process to review and prepare the 2008 report was inclusive and transparent and if the report submitted reflects the realities of your country. This review and analysis should be done with the involvement of other community sector groups, especially with people living with HIV and other key populations. Contact ICASO at [universalaccess2010@icaso.org](mailto:universalaccess2010@icaso.org) for tools and referrals to resources to help undertake for this community sector review.

**more/...**

5. See "Coordinating with Communities" guidelines on involvement of the community sector in national AIDS responses, found at [www.icaso.org](http://www.icaso.org) as an aid to planning and supporting meaningful involvement.

6. Country reports listed alphabetically at: <http://www.unaids.org/en/publications/2005ungassreporting/default.asp>

7. Review the ICASO report on Progress in the implementation of the DoC from the community sector perspective (2008) in English<sup>8</sup> and Spanish<sup>9</sup>, particularly the main findings and recommendations to key stakeholders.
8. Share with others (locally, regionally and internationally) all the information you find about these processes in your country. This will increase accountability and transparency and will provide support for advocacy actions. Document all relevant information on particular indicators not covered or reported on.
9. Take proactive steps to increase the sector's capacity and involvement in national monitoring and evaluation, by facilitating relevant technical support and advocating for the inclusion of community-level data in the country's monitoring and evaluation systems.
10. Contact ICASO if you are interested in receiving more information and if you have questions (see contacts at end), or visit <http://www.icaso.org>

Distribute this AIDS Advocacy Alert and copies of the documents mentioned in the alert to your colleagues.

---

The UNAIDS Guidelines are for the moment, only available in English. As the other language versions become available, ICASO will post them to its site at <http://www.icaso.org/ungass.html> Please check regularly for updated postings of the French, Spanish and Russian versions.



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

8. [http://www.icaso.org/publications/ICASO\\_PoliticalLeaders\\_260608.pdf](http://www.icaso.org/publications/ICASO_PoliticalLeaders_260608.pdf)

9. [http://www.icaso.org/publications/spa\\_political\\_web\\_240708.pdf](http://www.icaso.org/publications/spa_political_web_240708.pdf)

## SAMPLE LETTER TO THE NATIONAL AIDS AUTHORITY

### CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT IN THE UNGASS DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT ON HIV/AIDS REVIEW PROCESS

[Insert date]

Dear Mrs/Mr/Dr ...

On behalf of our organization/community working group **[insert name of organization or group]**, and as a member/s of civil society, I am writing to you to request our involvement in the preparation of the country progress report on the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, due on March 31, 2010.

This review represents an important opportunity for all stakeholders in the national response to HIV and AIDS to identify how effective we have all been in preventing new infections, and in providing treatment, care and support to all those in need. The important role that civil society organizations play in the response to the epidemic provides them with a unique and grounded perspective and access to information that would be invaluable to the review process.

The Declaration of Commitment itself calls on civil society groups to be an integral part of the preparation of the progress reports. In support of the review process in 2009/10, UNAIDS has highlighted that "the process of preparing the country progress reports should involve all partners involved in the AIDS response and provide an opportunity for reflection on the national response, its achievements as well as obstacles for achieving universal access."<sup>1</sup>

We are committed to achieving this by working in partnership with you. Therefore, we would like to arrange a meeting to discuss this involvement, such as the inclusion of other national organizations working on HIV and AIDS, and especially people living with HIV, and other groups.

Please can you share with us any existing information you have on the review process and time lines, including suggested dates and locations of meetings?

Sincerely,

Your name

Your organization/group's name and address

---

<sup>1</sup> From the foreword sent from Michele Sidibé, UNAIDS Executive Director, in the Guidelines on the Construction of Core Indicators for 2010 Reporting.

Information contained in this Advocacy Alert may be freely reproduced, published or otherwise used for non-profit purposes. Please cite the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO) as the source of the information.

**For more on ICASO's work visit [www.icaso.org](http://www.icaso.org) ■ Contact us at [icaso@icaso.org](mailto:icaso@icaso.org)**