



Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

**Assistant Director-General
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OHCHR REGISTRY

- 4 DEC. 2006

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23 November, 2006

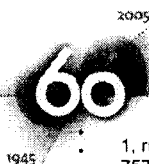
Ref. : SHS/RSP/RAC/06/264

Subject: Resolution E/CN.4/RES/2005/84, "The protection of human rights in the context of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)"

Resolution E/CN.4/RES/2005/84: "The protection of human rights in the context of HIV and AIDS", invites UN programmes and specialized agencies to promote programmes to address the urgent HIV-related human rights of women, young people and vulnerable groups.

In this regard, we wish to underline that *UNESCO's Strategy for Responding to HIV and AIDS* gives priority to reducing stigma and discrimination and ensuring human rights through the promotion of access to quality educational, health and information services for key populations. All UNESCO Sectors contribute to the Strategy in their respective fields of competence.

In particular, UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences Sector contributes to UNESCO's strategy on HIV mainly through addressing HIV-related discrimination and human rights issues and the structural causes of vulnerability. Based on the principle that protection and fulfilment of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights are essential to reduce vulnerability to HIV, to lessen the adverse impact on those infected and affected, and to empower individuals and communities to respond to the epidemic, UNESCO promotes youth-friendly, culturally appropriate and gender-sensitive HIV prevention and care programmes. The Youth Initiative on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights, launched by UNESCO and the UNAIDS Secretariat, is one of these programmes with a strong focus on human rights and HIV-related discrimination. The Initiative aims to empower young people (student organizations, youth NGOs, peer educators) to take action in their communities against the spread of HIV and the stigma and discrimination related to it. The Initiative employs a participatory approach and brings together training and action focusing on youth, human rights, HIV and AIDS. It contributes to raising awareness and understanding of HIV-related discrimination; organizes consultations, needs assessments and peer-training; produces youth-friendly information, education, communication and resource materials; and supports youth-led initiatives, including campaigning for voluntary testing and counselling,



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education, media and awareness-raising campaigns. In 2006, regional activities are launched in Africa and Latin America in the framework of the Initiative.

In Latin America, a regional workshop on HIV and Human Rights for young leaders took place in Peru and six youth-led initiatives from Paraguay, Peru, Chile, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Honduras to counter HIV-related discrimination among vulnerable populations were launched as a follow-up to the workshop. Furthermore, a Human Rights and Gender Toolkit for Action is being developed for Central America in cooperation with UNIFEM. In Africa, Toolkits on HIV-related stigma and discrimination for community radios and youth-to-youth peer education programmes for Portuguese-speaking African countries are being developed and two HIV and Human Rights training workshops with a gender focus are being planned.

UNESCO Field Offices on the ground contribute also with their respective programmes to *UNESCO's Strategy for Responding to HIV and AIDS*. For example, in 2006, the UNESCO Moscow Office, in collaboration with UNFPA and *Community of People Living with HIV/AIDS*, completed a survey to analyze public opinion towards the reproductive rights of women living with HIV and AIDS in selected regions of the Russian Federation.

In addition to *UNESCO's Strategy for Responding to HIV and AIDS*, *UNESCO's Integrated Strategy to Combat Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (32 C/13)* also promotes action to counter HIV-related stigma and discrimination. HIV-related stigma and discrimination build upon and reinforce other existing forms of discrimination related to sexuality, gender, race and poverty. The work with key populations is therefore essential, including injecting drug users, men who have sex with men, sex workers, women and other vulnerable populations. These groups, which already suffer a lack of human rights protection and are already subjected to social and economic discrimination, also suffer HIV-related stigma and discrimination more strongly than others.

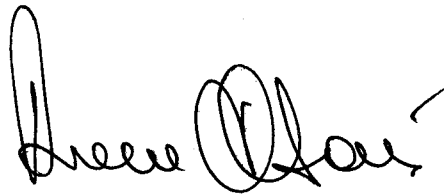
UNESCO believes that unless we address the educational, the socio-cultural and economic needs of people who are vulnerable to drug use, then prevention and treatment programmes have limited impact on the reduction of risk behaviours. UNESCO supports a number of programmes on school health and drug misuse awareness, as well as programmes for out of school youth utilising non-formal education to overcome vulnerability to HIV infection and reduce the harm related to drug misuse.

MSM are one of the most affected groups in the global HIV epidemic, and in several countries HIV and STI infection rates among MSM continue to rise. UNESCO has actively worked on MSM and HIV and AIDS in Southeast Asia (Thailand, Lao PDR, Vietnam and Cambodia). Interventions have included telephone hotlines, peer education projects, internet-based programmes, a project for male bar-based sex workers, a project encouraging the use of condoms in male saunas, creation of national workshops on MSM, and a regional training workshop for young MSM peer educators.

In the framework of Social and Human Science sector programmes, HIV-relevant human rights issues are also addressed from a perspective of research/policy making. UNESCO's social science research and poverty programmes address the issue, as do UNESCO's programmes with migrant populations in particular. The UNESCO Beijing Office has a specific HIV programme with migrant populations. UNESCO's International Coalition of Cities against Racism and

Discrimination is mainstreaming the issue by launching studies to analyse whether local policies and practices, including workplace policies and practices, respect human rights in the context of HIV and AIDS and promote effective programmes for the prevention and treatment of HIV and, in particular, counter HIV-related discrimination.

Finally, we wish to underline that UNESCO is committed to promote programmes to address HIV-relevant human rights issues, as advised by the Resolution. We also wish to seize the opportunity to send a brief comment concerning the Resolution. We strongly believe that the work with key populations, including injecting drug users, men who have sex with men, sex workers, women and other vulnerable populations, is essential in order to have an effective response to HIV and AIDS. Moreover, the Resolution and respective responsible UN organs and agencies should give specific attention to special groups and individuals, such as displaced people, communities in conflict, and post-conflict countries.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pierre Sané', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Pierre Sané