

Zero Discrimination Day
1 March 2021

END



INEQUALITIES



ABOUT ZERO DISCRIMINATION DAY

On Zero Discrimination Day, 1 March, we celebrate the right of everyone to live a full and productive life—and live it with dignity. Zero Discrimination Day highlights how people can become informed about and promote inclusion, compassion, peace and, above all, a movement for change. Zero Discrimination Day is helping to create a global movement of solidarity to end all forms of discrimination.

ZERO DISCRIMINATION DAY

END INEQUALITIES

On Zero Discrimination Day this year, UNAIDS is highlighting the urgent need to take action to end the inequalities surrounding income, sex, age, health status, occupation, disability, sexual orientation, drug use, gender identity, race, class, ethnicity and religion that continue to persist around the world.

Inequality is growing for more than 70% of the global population, exacerbating the risk of division and hampering economic and social development. And COVID-19 is hitting the most vulnerable people the hardest—even as new vaccines against COVID-19 are becoming available, there is great inequality in accessing them. Many have equated this to vaccine apartheid.

Confronting inequalities and ending discrimination is critical to ending AIDS. The world is off track from delivering on the shared commitment to end AIDS by 2030 not because of a lack of knowledge, capability or means to beat AIDS, but because of structural inequalities that obstruct proven solutions in HIV prevention and treatment. For example, recent research shows that gay men and other men who have sex with men are twice as likely to acquire HIV if they live in a country with punitive approaches to sexual orientation than if they live in a country with supportive legislation.

Tackling inequality is not a new commitment—in 2015, all countries pledged to reduce inequality within and between countries as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. But it is not yet one that the world has delivered on. As well as being core to ending AIDS, tackling inequality will also advance the human rights of people who are living with HIV, make societies better prepared to beat COVID-19 and other pandemics and support economic recovery and stability. Fulfilling the promise to tackle inequality will save millions of lives and benefit society as a whole. To do this, we must confront discrimination in all its forms.

But to achieve dignity for all, political, economic and social policies need to protect the rights of everyone and pay attention to the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized communities.

Ending inequality requires transformative change. Greater efforts are needed to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and there is a need to invest more in health, education, social protection and decent jobs.

**“INEQUALITY WORKS AGAINST HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT – FOR EVERYONE. WE ALL
SUFFER ITS CONSEQUENCES.”**

**“DISCRIMINATION, ABUSE AND LACK OF
ACCESS TO JUSTICE DEFINE INEQUALITY
FOR MANY, PARTICULARLY INDIGENOUS
PEOPLE, MIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND
MINORITIES OF ALL KINDS. SUCH
INEQUALITIES ARE A DIRECT ASSAULT
ON HUMAN RIGHTS.”**

**ANTÓNIO GUTERRES
UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL**



Governments must promote inclusive social and economic growth. They must eliminate discriminatory laws, policies and practices in order to ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities.

But we can all play our part by calling out discrimination where we see it, by setting an example or by advocating to change the law. We all have a role to play in ending discrimination and so reducing inequalities.

We cannot achieve sustainable development and make the planet better for all if people are excluded from the chance of a better life. In today's world, we are all interconnected. Global inequality affects us all, no matter who we are or where we are from.

This Zero Discrimination Day join us in raising awareness about the inequalities that prevent people from living a full and productive life and demanding that governments fulfil their commitments and obligations to end all forms of discrimination.





WHAT ARE SOME OF THE POLICY CHANGES NEEDED TO TACKLE INEQUALITIES?

- ➔ All discriminatory, stigmatizing and punitive legislation targeting marginalized and minority populations should be repealed.
- ➔ All laws that discriminate against women should be repealed and policies and programmes to tackle gender discrimination should be introduced.
- ➔ Universal high school completion should be guaranteed, with a special emphasis on enabling girls' completion of education. Investments in schooling should be increased and school charges should be removed.
- ➔ Social protection systems, including child benefits, unemployment benefits and basic income grants, should be expanded.
- ➔ Free public universal health care should be provided as a right, with tailored and community-administered services as an integrated part of it.
- ➔ International debt should be restructured by working with debtors and creditors and a fair system of arbitration should be established.
- ➔ Intellectual property rights rules should be waived during emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ➔ The right of people to form and join organizations should be upheld and their involvement in open debate welcomed.

TAKE ACTION

This year's Zero Discrimination Day campaign highlights actions that individuals, civil society or governments can take to challenge inequalities.

5

ACTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS



1.

Highlight inequalities, so we can all advocate for change—post your initiatives for zero discrimination on social media.



2.

Be an ally, call out inequalities when you see them.



3.

Demand change from your government, parliamentarian or ombudsperson.



4.

Start a petition to change laws, initiatives and attitudes that stigmatize and discriminate.



5.

Support a campaign or an organization that is working towards making the world a more just and equal place.

5

ACTIONS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS



3.

Conduct awareness-raising sessions on human rights in a workplace, school, clinic or peer network.

4.

Convey a request to remove discriminatory laws to your representative in parliament or local government, United Nations office or national body responsible for monitoring human rights in the country.

2.

Provide support and a safe space, including legal support and pastoral care for people who experience discrimination.

5.

Adopt and promote a policy that prevents and protects against discrimination in the civil society organization workplace.

5

ACTIONS FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS AND GOVERNMENTS



1.

Inform yourself about existing inequalities and their impact on the people affected.



2.

Raise awareness among other public servants, members of the judiciary and law enforcement officers.

3.

Facilitate platforms of parliamentarians, nationally and internationally, to commit to promote good laws that advance the well-being and fundamental dignity of everyone, based on evidence and guided by human rights standards.

4.

Be an ally and act on civil society requests to remove inequalities and give civil society a platform so that their voices can be heard.



5.

Table amendments to laws or call for a review of the legislation.

5

ACTIONS FOR PARTNERS AND DONOR ORGANIZATIONS

1.

Inform yourself about existing inequalities and their impact on the people affected.

2.

Adopt and promote a policy that prevents and protects against discrimination in the donor organization workplace.

3.

Commit to prioritizing the reform of discriminatory laws in the six settings identified by the Global Partnership to Eliminate All Forms of HIV-Related Stigma and Discrimination—the health sector, the education sector, the workplace, the justice system, families and communities, and emergency and humanitarian settings.



4.

Ensure that funding goes towards programmes that are grounded on human rights and promote equality at their core.

5.

Work with local organizations that are affected by discrimination or that are working towards ending inequalities.



FOCUS ON

HIV-RELATED INEQUALITIES, STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

DECADES OF EXPERIENCE AND EVIDENCE FROM THE HIV RESPONSE SHOWS THAT INTERSECTING INEQUALITIES ARE PREVENTING PROGRESS TO ENDING AIDS AS A PUBLIC HEALTH THREAT BY 2030.

Ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030 is possible. By 2019, more than 40 countries had crossed or were within reach of a key epidemiological milestone towards ending AIDS. Millions of people living with HIV enjoy long and healthy lives and there is a continued reduction in new HIV infections. Despite all our efforts, this progress remains fragile in many countries and among key and vulnerable groups, with social and economic inequalities slowing progress not only in the HIV response but towards other health and development goals.

Inequalities in access to HIV services and knowledge is a key reason why the 2020 global HIV targets were missed. Inequalities in the HIV response reside along multiple intersecting axes. These inequalities shine a spotlight on societal, legal, economic and other inequalities that foster stigma and discrimination, make people vulnerable to HIV and make people living with HIV more likely to die of AIDS-related illnesses. A central reason why inequalities in the HIV response remain so stark and persistent is that we have not successfully addressed the social and structural factors that increase HIV vulnerability and diminish the ability of many to access and effectively use HIV services.

Discrimination and inequalities are closely intertwined. Intersecting forms of discrimination, be it structural or social, against individuals and groups, can lead to a wide range of inequalities—for example, in income, educational outcomes, health and employment.







However, inequalities themselves can also lead to stigma and discrimination. It is critical, therefore, when looking to reduce inequalities to address discrimination.

THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION TO ELIMINATE ALL FORMS OF HIV-RELATED STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

Following a call from civil society in 2017 to accelerate and scale up action to address stigma and discrimination, UNAIDS, UN Women, the United Nations Development Programme and the Global Network of People Living with HIV agreed to co-convene the Global Partnership to Eliminate All Forms of HIV-Related Stigma and Discrimination.

The global partnership's goal is to catalyse and accelerate the implementation of commitments made to end HIV-related stigma and discrimination by United Nations Member States, United Nations agencies, bilateral and international donors, nongovernmental organizations and communities.

Launched on 10 December 2018, on the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the global partnership has three objectives:

- Support the fulfilment of commitments. It will put into action the human rights obligations of United Nations Member States to end stigma and discrimination already made at the global, regional and national levels.

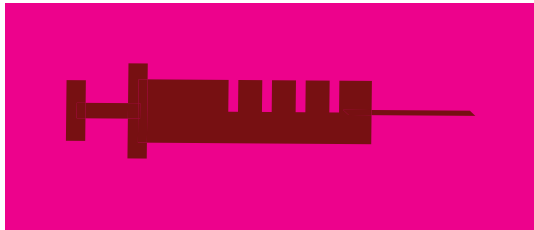
- Build meaningful partnerships. It will establish, strengthen and revitalize partnerships among stakeholders to implement and scale up programmes towards ending HIV-related stigma and discrimination.
- Share responsibility for measurement and accountability. It will collect and disseminate data to inform policy and programming, measure progress and support accountability towards the elimination of HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

The Global Partnership for Action to Eliminate all Forms of HIV-Related Stigma and Discrimination has identified six main settings where stigma and discrimination occur and create or reinforce inequality—the health sector, the education sector, the workplace, the justice system, families and communities, and emergency and humanitarian settings.

Recognizing the equal worth and dignity of every person is not only an ethical imperative and an obligation arising from international human rights instruments but is also central to aspirations for ending AIDS. By closing inequalities and reducing new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths, the HIV response in 2021–2026 can contribute to a host of positive social and economic outcomes and accelerate progress towards sustainable development for all.

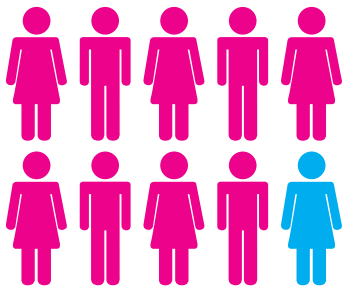


FACTS ABOUT INEQUALITIES



COVID-19 AND INEQUALITIES

- Almost 130 countries, with 2.5 billion people, are yet to administer a single dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, including most countries in Africa.
- Uganda will pay US\$ 7 per dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine, South Africa will pay more than US\$ 5, which is double what the European Union will pay (just over US\$ 2 per dose).
- Nine million lives were lost over the six years when antiretroviral therapy was not available to people in poorer countries because of its high price.
- The World Bank expects the number of newly impoverished people to rise from 88 million–115 million in 2020 to 119 million–124 million in 2021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.



9 out of 10

people in some of the world's poorest countries are set to miss out on a COVID-19 vaccine this year.

DISCRIMINATION IN THE HEALTH CARE SECTOR

- In Peru and Tajikistan, 21% of people living with HIV reported being denied health services at least once in the previous 12 months because of their HIV status.
- One in three women living with HIV across 19 countries reported experiencing at least one form of discrimination related to their sexual and reproductive health in a health-care setting within the past 12 months.

52%



of women in Canada who inject drugs had avoided seeking health care in the previous 12 months due to the fear of discrimination.

WORKPLACE

- Globally, workers have lost US\$ 3.7 trillion in earnings since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, while the world's billionaires have gained US\$ 3.9 trillion since the start of the pandemic.
- Globally, in 2020 less than half of women (46.9%) participated in the global workforce.
- Globally, only 41 million men (1.5%) provide unpaid care on a full-time basis, compared to 606 million women (21.7%).

WOMEN ARE EXPERIENCING A TOTAL WAGE BILL LOSS OF ABOUT 8.1% COMPARED TO JUST 5.4% FOR MEN.



JUSTICE

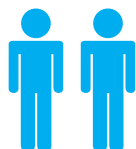
- In 92 countries, girls can marry before the age of 18 years, but in 46 countries they need the consent of a parent to be tested for HIV.
- Globally, 243 million women and girls were abused by an intimate partner in the past year.
- Only 112 countries have a specific law against domestic violence.
- Only 73 countries grant migrants equal access to health care.
- At least 98 countries criminalize some aspect of sex work.

68

countries (at least) have laws that specifically criminalize HIV nondisclosure, exposure or transmission

69

countries still criminalize same-sex sexual relations

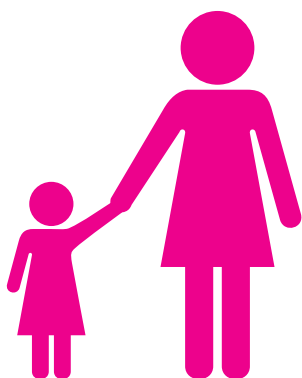


17

countries criminalize transgender people.



Globally, one in three women experienced physical or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, emerging data and reports from those on the front lines have shown that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, has intensified.



AT THE END OF 2020, A SHOCKING 13% OF THE WORLD'S WOMEN AND GIRLS, 469 MILLION PEOPLE, WERE LIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY.

HOUSEHOLDS

- More than 16 billion hours are spent on unpaid care work every day—the equivalent of 2 billion people working eight hours per day without pay. The actual value of this work amounts to 9% of global gross domestic product—equivalent to US\$ 11 trillion.
- Almost 1.6 billion informal workers are affected by the lockdowns and containment measures against COVID-19 and/or are working in the hardest-hit sectors.

On an average pre-COVID-19 day, women already spent about three times as many hours on unpaid domestic work and care work as men.

3x

EMERGENCY AND HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS

- Human-induced climate change has spurred a near doubling of natural disasters in the past 20 years.
- People in low-income countries are at least four times more likely to be displaced by extreme weather than people in high-income countries.



IN 2019,
34 MILLION

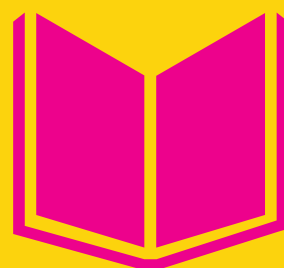
PEOPLE GLOBALLY WERE ACUTELY
FOOD INSECURE DUE TO CLIMATE
EXTREMES; WEATHER-RELATED
HAZARDS TRIGGERED SOME
24.9 MILLION DISPLACEMENTS IN
140 COUNTRIES.

EDUCATION

Because of the COVID-19
pandemic, more than

1.1 billion

students globally were
out of school as of
June 2020, including more
than 184 million in
sub-Saharan Africa.



**NEARLY 34 MILLION GIRLS, EQUIVALENT TO 38%
OF GIRLS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 12 AND 14 YEARS
AND 60.5% OF GIRLS 15 TO 17 YEARS OLD, WERE
NOT IN SECONDARY SCHOOL IN 2018. GENDER
GAPS IN EDUCATION PERSIST.**

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**#ZERO
DISCRIMINATION**