



# AIDS Advocacy Alert

## Urgent Action Now: UNGASS on HIV Country Review Process

Prepared by the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO)<sup>1</sup>

December 2007

Special Edition for  
World AIDS Day

The UNGASS Review process should be taking place right now in every country:  
**Urgently contact the UNAIDS and National AIDS program representatives in your country**

Six years ago, under the heading of 'Global Crisis - Global Action', the United Nations General Assembly held an unprecedented Special Session on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS) - the first time the General Assembly had ever addressed a specific health issue. The resulting [UNGASS Declaration of Commitment \(DoC\)](#) on HIV/AIDS adopted by all UN member states provided a comprehensive framework to halt and to reverse the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2015, in line with the [Millennium Development Goals](#) and included specific and measurable milestones for 2003, 2005 and 2010.

Every year, governments report on progress they have made toward implementing these commitments. Governments are expected to submit to UNAIDS the country progress report on the implementation of the DoC by **January 31st, 2008**.

The country progress reports are meant to reflect the reviews and input from all national stakeholders, government and civil society, in what UNAIDS calls the "joint responsibility" of national reporting. UNAIDS is encouraging its country-level staff to facilitate an inclusive process to prepare and validate the country progress report. UNAIDS in collaboration with key partners has created and reviewed the [Guidelines on Construction of Core Indicators](#) to support the monitoring of the DoC on HIV/AIDS. UNAIDS has also put in place a mechanism to support countries in the preparation of the country progress report. Contact the UNAIDS [Partnership Officer](#) in your country, the Civil Society Partnership Office at [csp@unaids.org](mailto:csp@unaids.org) or the Monitoring and Evaluation Division at [ungassindicators@unaids.org](mailto:ungassindicators@unaids.org) in Geneva.

### Be prepared!

- Review the [Declaration of Commitment](#)
- Review the [Guidelines on Construction of Core Indicators](#) (reporting guidelines)
- Review the [reports that your country](#) has submitted in the past

### Get support!

If you have been or are trying to be involved in the preparation of your country's progress report, and would like support or to share your experiences, please write to [universalaccess2010@icaso.org](mailto:universalaccess2010@icaso.org). Collecting examples of good practice and sharing these can be an incentive to others and provide innovative ideas for including civil society in the country process.

<sup>1</sup> The ICASO International Secretariat in partnership with AIDS Action Europe (AAE), African Council of AIDS Service Organizations (AfriCASO), Asia Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organizations (APCASO), Latin American and Caribbean Council of AIDS Service Organizations (LACCASO) and North American Council of AIDS Service Organizations (NACASO).

## Key Actions **You** Can Take Now:

1. **Contact** the National AIDS Authority (or 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. The review process and report preparation should involve meetings of stakeholders, including for validating the report.
2. **Ask** the UNAIDS Country Coordinator (UCC) in your country about what the UNAIDS country office is doing to facilitate input from civil society throughout the DoC review process. **Request** that UNAIDS facilitate an inclusive and participatory process among all stakeholders.
3. **Mobilize** your civil society colleagues and partner organizations to advocate for the meaningful involvement of the community sector in the review and reporting processes<sup>2</sup>. **Establish** a UNGASS working group (or similar) within your organization or network and encourage your colleagues to engage actively with these processes.
4. **Share** all the information you find about these processes in your country (internally and with the rest of the world). This will increase accountability and transparency and will provide support for advocacy actions.
5. **Read** the DoC and the Core Indicators Guidelines and **determine** which specific issues are most relevant to your country's epidemic and response. Discuss with other civil society organizations, including people living with HIV and key populations, which indicators best describe how your country is or is not responding to AIDS.
6. **Participate** in the 'official' review and report writing processes using information and data obtained through your own review and analysis. This can include data you collect during your routine reporting and evidence gathering, for example, stories of experiences by clients, service providers, and colleagues. A true assessment of the government's response can not be described only in numbers - it can also be described in individual experiences.
7. **Prepare and share a shadow report** and submit it to UNAIDS ([ungassindicators@unaid.org](mailto:ungassindicators@unaid.org)) if you believe that the 'official' report does not adequately represent the national response to the epidemic and the progress of the implementation of the DoC.
8. **Contact** ICASO if you are interested in receiving more information and if you have questions (see contacts at end), or go to [www.icaso.org](http://www.icaso.org). Also go to [www.ungasshiv.org](http://www.ungasshiv.org).

Distribute this AIDS ADVOCACY ALERT and copies of the documents mentioned above to your colleagues.

We are looking to provide this document in four languages (English, French, Spanish, and Russian) on the ICASO web site [www.icaso.org](http://www.icaso.org).

---

<sup>2</sup> 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.