

# **POLITICAL LEADERSHIP ORIENTED TO HIV & AIDS CHANGE (Lesson learnt from 8-ICAAP Colombo)**

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1

## **PROGRESSES**

- **Members of Parliament in some countries in the region (including Viet Nam) have meetings to share experience in Law on HIV/AIDS prevention and control; discuss plans for reciprocal supports on legal issues to implement HIV/AIDS prevention and control programmes, protect rights of people livings with HIV (PLWHs), and vulnerable groups;**
- **Association of PLWHs is more and more developed and requires recognition from nations as a social community (Australia, Thailand, Nepal, Myanmar, Papua New Ghine,...);**

2

## PROGRESSES

- **The fact that the President Mahinda Rajapaksa participated and made speech at the opening session as well as he had for 10 years progressively the position of the National Committee for HIV/AIDS in Srilanka and the prevalence rate in this country is one of the lowest in the region, is a very clear evidence for the successful leadership role in fighting against this AIDS epidemic.**

3

## DIFFICULTIES AND CHALLENGES

- In some countries where Laws and Regulations are legal challenges for HIV/AIDS prevention and control such as: criminalization of commercial sex, drug users and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered.
- The alternative treatment for drug users has dealt with big legal challenges all over the region, although these legal barriers are not stated in the International Conventions on drug prevention and control. So far, there have been only two countries in the region, Viet Nam and Iran, that have put into law the intervention to reduce harm in HIV/AIDS prevention and control.

## DIFFICULTIES AND CHALLENGES

- Stigma towards PLWHs was an issue that has been most mentioned in the conference. The word “stigma” has appeared for about 70 to 80% whenever challenges in HIV/AIDS prevention and control were mentioned; at the same time there have been very few intervention measures to solve stigma and discrimination.
- Harm reduction measures have been implemented within narrow scope and relatively low in comparison with existing needs, especially with substitution therapy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Declaration of the establishment of Network for drug users in Asia through “Minimum standards for civil community to participate in HIV/AIDS prevention and control”.
- It is necessary to enhance communication between Members of Parliament and PLWHs;
- In finding out solutions for immigrants who live with HIV, it needs to have cooperation among Governments as well as multisectoral collaboration among ministries, branches in each country (In Malaysia, apart from Ministry of Health, Ministry of Immigration, Human Resource Ministry... and private sector also participate in HIV/AIDS prevention and control);

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is necessary to carry out legal innovations; consider substitution therapy as medical treatment; there must be clear guidance to mainstream reproductive health protection programmes into HIV/AIDS prevention and control programmes... Legal reform needs to be oriented to the objective of strengthening justice and ensuring law implementation;
- Policies for HIV/AIDS prevention and control need to be based on scientific basis; civilian society can contribute to change existing regulations in HIV/AIDS prevention and control.





**Thank you !**