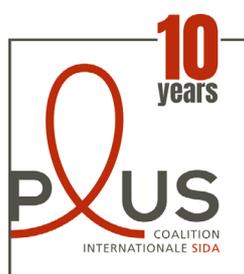


AIDS 2018 AMSTERDAM

JUST SAY NO TO THE WAR ON DRUGS

Coalition PLUS launches its campaign against the war on drugs



July 2018

As part of the 22nd International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2018), which will bring together 18,000 participants (scientists, activists and political leaders) in Amsterdam, from the 23rd to 27th of July, Coalition PLUS launches its *Just say no to the war on drugs* campaign. With this campaign, Coalition PLUS, which gathers 100 organizations from 40 countries “cocks a snook” at the famous American campaign of the 80s “*Just say no to drugs*”.

Indeed, 32 years ago in the United States, **the First Lady Nancy Reagan** [1] said no to drugs in a campaign that claimed to be educational. The campaign turned out to be very moralising and stigmatising, and has had the effect of fueling an extremely expensive and totally ineffective war on drugs globally.

Today we, Coalition PLUS, say no to the war on drugs. We call for an in-depth change in the global paradigm on drugs. We are calling for an evidence-based and pragmatic drug policy that makes the health of people who use drugs a first choice over blind and counter-productive repression.

The war on drugs: HIV and viral hepatitis epidemics' best ally

While it did not reduce drug consumption or trafficking, the war on drugs has led to a real sanitary crisis. It has the effect of discriminating and, more importantly, of criminalizing people who use drugs, putting them in a precarious and marginalised situation. Besides, it hinders their access to healthcare and prevention tools. 80% of scientific studies come to the conclusion that criminalization of people who use drugs worsens HIV and HCV epidemics. [2].

- Nearly 1 in 5 people who inject drugs lives with HIV, and more than half live with Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) globally [3].
- Nearly one in ten new HIV infections worldwide is among people who use drugs [4].
- New HIV infections worldwide increased by 33% among people who use drugs between 2011 and 2015 [5]. They are booming particularly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, as well as in the Maghreb region and in West and Central
- People who use drugs have less access to antiretroviral treatment than others [6]. In Russia, they account for only 25% of people on treatment while they make up 67% of people living with HIV. In Asia, only 18% of people who use drugs were on treatment in 2013. [7]

Luis Mendão, President, GAT Portugal, and administrator, Coalition PLUS: “In the 90s, the war on drugs almost killed me. I’ve been infected with HCV and HIV because of this policy. With my HIV+ comrades and our allies, we successfully fought to stop this nonsense in our country. We want a drug policy based on scientific knowledge, respect for human rights and community participation!”

Paradigm shift: prioritizing harm reduction programs

Globally, only 8% of people who use psychoactive substances and who are in need of harm reduction tools actually have full access to them [8]! In 2016, only 90 countries worldwide had a needle and syringe program and 80 had access to opiate substitution treatment [9].

However, with regards to the risk of HIV and viral hepatitis infection, harm reduction tools have proved their worth: provision of sterile equipment (syringes and needles, filters, straws, pipes, etc.), safe injection techniques, supervised drug injection centres, etc.

This is particularly the case in Portugal, where massive investments in harm reduction strategies since the early 2000s have drastically reduced the number of infections among people who inject drugs. In 2013, only 7% of new HIV infections were among drug users: it was 52% 13 years earlier [10]. By contrast, in Mauritius, new HIV infections jumped by 20% in 2015 among people who inject drugs, one year after harm reduction programs were challenged by the Minister of Health [11]. A situation that was strongly condemned by PILS, our member organisation in Mauritius.

To political leaders, magistrates, law enforcement and health workers from all countries, we call for:

- The decriminalization of people who use drugs, in line with the World Health Organisation and the United Nations joint statement dated 27 June, 2017.
- Universal access to Harm Reduction tools (needle and syringe programs, supervised drug injection centers) and substitution treatments, including in prison settings.
- The immediate cessation of discrimination and abuse inflicted to people who use drugs, as well as politics leaning towards drug user phobia.
- An increase in domestic and international funding for Harm reduction programs.

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About Coalition PLUS:

Coalition PLUS is an international coalition of community-based organizations against AIDS and viral hepatitis, founded in 2008 and now present worldwide with 100 partners in 40 countries. As members of our Board, 14 associations from the North and the South participate in the decision-making process. With our community-based approach, we advocate for people who live with HIV / hepatitis and key populations to be systematically involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of the healthcare programs that directly affects them. Through our action and our 6 regional platforms, we aim to strengthen our members' and partners' capacities, while providing essential space for dialogue. Coalition PLUS is also Special Advisor to UNAIDS regarding the Western and Central Africa catch-up plan.

Sources

[1] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQXgVM30mIY>

[2] HIV and the criminalization of drug use among people who inject drugs: a systematic review, DeBeck, Kora et al., The Lancet HIV, Volume 4, Issue 8, e357 - e374

[3] Denehardt, L. et al. (2017), Global prevalence of injecting drug use and sociodemographic features and prevalence of HIV, HBV, and HCV in a multi-drug systematic review, The Lancet, Volume 5, (No. 12, e1192-e1207).

[4] Idem

[5] Idem

[6] BM Mathers, Degenhardt L, Ali H, et al., HIV prevention, treatment and care services for people who inject drugs: a systematic review of global, regional and national coverage. Lancet, 2010; 375 (9719): 1014-1028

[7] F. and Kazatchkine MD (2007, August); 'Antiretroviral HIV treatment and care for injecting drug users: an evidence-based overview', International Journal of Drug Policy 18 (4)

[8] HIV and the criminalization of drug use: a systematic review, DeBeck, Kora et al., The Lancet HIV, Volume 4, Issue 8, e357 - e374

[9] Harm Reduction International, The Global State of Harm Reduction, 2016

[10] "Drug Policy in Portugal", Open Society Foundations, 2011 & Relatório Annual 2013 : a situação do País em Matéria de Drogas e Toxicod dependência", SICAD, 2014

[11] Activity report, Coalition PLUS, 2016

COALITION PLUS PROGRAM AT IAC 2018 AMSTERDAM

SUNDAY, JULY 22TH

7:30 - 15:00 / Hall 11B

Pre-Conference: "STI 2018: Understanding and Addressing the HIV and STI Syndemics"
With Stéphane Morel, AIDES (France): "Promoting sexual health through community education and activism", at 14:10

MONDAY, JULY 23TH

12:30 - 14:30 / Emerald Room

Pre-Conference: "Getting to 90: Addressing inequalities in the HIV continuum of care in Europe and Central Asia"
With Daniel Simões, GAT (Portugal): "Addressing the first 90: How can HIV testing more efficiently reach those in need to promote early diagnosis?" at 12:50.

13:00 - 14:30 / European NGO Booth 618

Panel discussion: "Best practices: NGO promoting access to PrEP"
With Coline Mey, AIDES (France) ; Ricardo Fernandes, GAT (Portugal) ; Victor Pecoul, Groupe Sida Genève (Switzerland) ; Mihai Lixandru, ARAS (Romania) ; Christian Verger, AIDES (France)

15:00 - 16:30 / NGO booth 618

Panel discussion: "Best Medicines at the best price: Overcoming EU IP barriers, the example of SCPs and access to generic Truvada"
With Charlotte Glemarec, AIDES (France)

TUESDAY, JULY 24TH

11:00 - 11:45 / Room G106-107

Press conference: "Harm reduction and the war on drugs: community based work in a challenging environment in francophone Africa and the Caribbean"
With Mehdi Karkouri, ALCS (Morocco) ; Leinadine Lucien, COIN (Dominican Republic) ; Nicolas Ritter, PILS (Mauritius) ; Charles T. Somé, REVS PLUS (Burkina Faso) ;

11:00-12:30 / Room E102

Workshop: "U=U: Crafting Supportive Public Health Policy from the Scientific Evidence to Support Community Action"
With AIDES (France) ; Coalition PLUS (inter.)

12:30 - 14:30 / Hall 1

Poster: "Transactional sex among men who have sex with men participating in the CohMSM prospective cohort study in West Africa"
With ARCAD-SIDA (Mali) and Coalition PLUS (Inter.)

Poster: "Sex work among female workers at the Kokoyo artisanal gold mining site in Mali - results from the ANRS-12339 Sanu Gundo cross-sectional study"
With ARCAD-SIDA (Mali) and Coalition PLUS

Poster: "CCM key populations representatives follow-up: from simple representation to effective participation to address Human Rights barriers to services"
With PILS (Mauritius) ; Coalition PLUS (Inter.)

12:30 - 14:15 - UNAIDS Room

Session: "The catch-up plan in West and Central Africa: Lessons learned and way forward to ensure the accelerated scale up of ART"
With Aliou Sylla, Coalition PLUS (inter.)

16:00 - 17:00 / France Booth

« Promouvoir la prévention diversifiée à l'échelle locale grâce aux nouvelles technologies de communication et au marketing digital »
With AIDES (France)

18:30 - 20:30 / Hall 10

Non-commercial satellite: "Scaling-up HIV viral load in resource-limited settings: Where are we challenges, solutions and perspectives"
With Jeanne Gapiya, ANSS (Burundi)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 25TH

10:30 - 11:30 / France booth

Panel discussion : « Une approche préventive et en faveur des droits sexuels et reproductifs »
With Coalition PLUS (tbc)

10:45 - 12:45 / UNAIDS Working space

Panel discussion: "PrEP: making supply meet demand the needs of DU, Trans, and FSW. Lessons from working with MSM"
With Richard Stranz & Coline Mey, AIDES (France)

11:00 - 12:30 / Elicium 2

Non-commercial satellite: "Coming of age with HIV: A testimony of our success and a measure of our readiness for the future"
With Luis Mendao, GAT (Portugal)

12:30 - 14:30 / Hall 1

Poster: "Knowledge and Intention to use PrEP among the Male-To-Female population in Ecuador: Results from a community-based survey (2016)"
With Kimirina (Ecuador); Coalition PLUS (inter.)

Poster: "Chemsex and PrEP: Do individuals engaging in "chemsex" have the intention to take PrEP? Results from the community-based survey "Flash! PrEP in Europe"
With AIDES (France) ; Coalition PLUS (inter.)

Poster: "MSM Prep users in Europe: who is and is not having regular medical follow-up? Findings from the community-based research study «Flash! PrEP in Europe»"
With AIDES (France) ; Coalition PLUS (inter.)

Day / Elicium 2

Oral abstract : "Incidence of HIV-infection in the ANRS Prevenir study in Paris region with daily or on-demand PrEP with TDF/FTC"
With Stéphane Morel AIDES (France), Daniela Rojas Castro, Coalition PLUS (inter.)

13:00 - 13:45 / Room G106-107

Press conference: "A reality check on progress towards HCV elimination in five middle-income countries"
 With *Maria Donatelli, Coalition PLUS (France); Mehdi Karkouri, ALCS (Morocco); Caroline Thomas, PKNI (Indonesia)*

16:00 - 17:00 / France booth

Panel discussion: "Global Fund Replenishment Conference: What Conditions for Success?"
 With *Aurélien Beaucomp, AIDES (France), and Coalition PLUS (tbc)*

18:30 - 20:30 / Forum

Non-commercial satellite: "HIV and co-infections in at-risk populations: addressing cross-border treatment needs and ensuring earlier diagnosis of migrants, homeless, prisoners and other vulnerable populations with co-infections"
 With *Daniel Simões, GAT (Portugal)*

18:30 - 20:30 / Room G102-103

Non-commercial satellite: "Building a path to HCV elimination: community's perspectives in strengthening co-infection policy responses"
 With *Nicolas Ritter, Coalition PLUS (Inter.); Mehdi Karkouri, ALCS (Morocco); Caroline Thomas, PKNI (Indonesia)*

THURSDAY JULY, 26TH**10:30 - 11:30 / France booth**

Panel discussion : « Présentation et perspectives de la Déclaration communautaire de Paris de juillet 2017 »
 With *Nathan Boumendil, AIDES (France)*

12:30 - 14:30 / Hall 1

Poster: "Complacency is the new problem: Comparative analysis of recent outbreaks of HIV among persons who inject drugs in Europe and North America"
 With *ARAS (Romania)*

Poster: "Community-Based Services for expanding HIV testing access, coverage and linkage to care from the perspective of combined prevention. An Ecuadorian experience"
 With *Kimirina (Ecuador); Coalition PLUS (Inter.)*

Poster: "Which MSM are most at risk of becoming HIV-infected in West Africa?"
 With *ARCAD-SIDA (Mali)*

Poster: "Risk factors for loss to follow-up, transfer or death among people living with HIV on first ART regimen in Mali"
 With *ARCAD-SIDA (Mali)*

Poster: "CheckME™: an integrative Smartphone app for HIV/STI prevention and sexual health promotion tailored for MSM in Portugal"
 With *GAT (Portugal)*

Poster: "Combining research and advocacy is key to the HIV response. An example from Morocco"
 With *ALCS (Morocco); Coalition PLUS (Inter.)*

Poster: "Success of inter-associative advocacy strategies for access to dolutegravir in Morocco"
 With *ALCS (Morocco); Coalition PLUS (Inter.)*

Poster: "Evaluating the reach of a prevention campaign for men who have sex with men in Quebec, Canada"
 With *COCQ-SIDA (Canada)*

16:00 - 17:00 / France booth

Panel discussion : « PrEP : présentation des résultats de l'étude PREVENIR »
 With *Stéphane Morel and David Michels, AIDES (France)*

18:30 - 20:30 / Auditorium

Non-commercial satellite: "Harm Reduction and war on drugs: community-based work in a challenging environment in francophone Africa and the Caribbean"
 With *Valentin Simionov, ARAS (Romania); Malick Samassekou, ARCAD SIDA (Mali); Charles Somé, REVS PLUS (Burkina Faso); Mehdi Karkouri, ALCS (Morocco); Nicolas Ritter, PILS (Mauritius).*

FRIDAY, JULY 27TH**10:30 - 11:30 / France booth**

Panel discussion: « Quelles stratégies vers l'atteinte du premier 90? »
 With *Mehdi Karkouri, President, ALCS (Morocco) and Administrator, Coalition PLUS*

11:30 - 12:30 / Harm Reduction Networking Zone

Panel discussion: "Different situations yet similar needs? European Community organizations' view on Harm reduction and Drug users' experience of Drug Policy"
 With *Richard Stranz, AIDES (France); Alina Bocai, Cristina Fierbinteanu, ARAS (Romania); Daniel Simoes, GAT (Portugal)*