

THE WASHINGTON D.C. DECLARATION PLUS: INCLUDING THE INVISIBLE 15 PERCENT

The official Washington Declaration emerging from this conference is calling for an “end to stigma and discrimination” but so far, these phrases have never been about us. We are participants in the first-ever Disability and HIV Leadership Forum and a delegation of youth with disabilities attending AIDS 2012. We are students, activists, advocates, organizers, and leaders. We have traveled to this conference from Barbados, Ethiopia, Guyana, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Mali, Mongolia, Namibia, Nepal, Rwanda, Serbia, Sudan, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, United States, Uruguay, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. We are a small group, but today we are a voice for 15 percent of the world’s population: the one billion people in the world with disabilities.

We are deeply concerned that people with disabilities remain at a heightened risk of acquiring HIV. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities codified the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination on the basis of disability – yet people with disabilities remain marginalized or excluded from HIV prevention, treatment, and care.

We are pleased that 153 countries have signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and that 117 of these countries have gone one step further and ratified the Convention. We acknowledge that steps taken in recent years have made International AIDS Conferences more accessible for people with disabilities. Yet we know that much more remains to be done.

At the 19th International AIDS Conference in Washington, DC, USA,

We call for the following:

- 1 A plenary at the 20th International AIDS Conference, in 2014, that finally addresses disability and HIV and finally includes speakers with disabilities.
- 2 The creation of global HIV prevention and treatment goals that do not exclude anyone with a disability, that ensure access to prevention and treatment for people with disabilities, and that take our specific needs into consideration.
- 3 National, regional, and international HIV plans that ensure the active and full participation of persons with disabilities.
- 4 The collection of data about people with disabilities to better determine our HIV risk, and the involvement of people with disabilities in HIV research. Governments cannot claim to “Know Your Epidemic” if they don’t know how HIV is affecting people with disabilities.
- 5 The recognition of people with disabilities as a most-at-risk population, and the inclusion of people with disabilities in UN reports on HIV.
- 6 The commitment and guarantee of national and international donors to provide funding specifically targeted to address the needs and fulfill the rights of persons with disabilities.
- 7 The commitment and guarantee of national and international donors that 15 percent of the beneficiaries of HIV-related programs and services will be people with disabilities, reflecting the percentage of people with disabilities in every community.
- 8 Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by every country in the world.
- 9 Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into all national legal systems, and timely reporting by governments to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- 10 Nothing about us without us: the full, active, and meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of HIV prevention, care, and treatment programs.

Please contact me:

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