

MOSCOW DECLARATION

Cooperation of HIV Service and LGBT Organizations in Russia to Protect Health and Well-Being of MSM/LGB/TG People Including Counteractions for HIV Prevention

Adopted at the First Russian National Conference of HIV Service Organizations and the LGBT Movement (16–18 December 2016, Moscow)

WE, THE REPRESENTATIVES OF HIV SERVICE AND LGBT ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTION GROUPS,

gathered at the *First Russian National Conference of HIV Service Organizations and the LGBT Movement* to improve efficiency through community capacity building, shared experience and cooperation with government agencies, working in the field of HIV prevention and treatment, in order to combat HIV among MSM/LGB/TG people in Russia,

following the principles of public health care and recognizing that public health care covers a very wide range of social measures for health protection, disease prevention, prolongation of life and health promotion, with meaningful engagement of different stakeholders from a variety of spheres, including non-governmental, non-profit and community-based organizations, with the systematic use of strategic information that enables responsive measures to reduce the spread of HIV, which can be beneficial for the key populations in terms of combating the HIV epidemic, including MSM/LGB/TG people;

recognizing an integrated approach to health protection and services provision, which centers around treatment and control of diseases and improvement of the social situation in order to reduce stress for MSM/LGB/TG people caused by constant social stigma and discrimination, including such ways as promotion of grassroots sports, fitness and a healthy lifestyle among MSM/LGB/TG people, including those living with HIV;

expressing concern over the adequacy of the level of knowledge and skills in prevention, treatment and health protection of MSM/LGB/TG people, including youngsters;

complying with the definition of sexual health given by the WHO, and considering that it is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality... Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence¹;

recognizing that access to high-quality health care services for the members of the key populations, in terms of overcoming the epidemic, including MSM/LGB/TG people, is an integral part of public health care and human rights principles and includes the right of MSM/LGB/TG people to comprehensive and high-quality health care, without discrimination;

expressing confidence that the quality and availability of services are key factors defining the efficiency of measures aimed to reduce the burden of HIV for MSM/LGB/TG people and must be based on respect, be acceptable and accessible by the recipient in order to attract and convince them to continue to use the services;

stressing that empowerment of communities is a process where MSM/LGB/TG people have rights, opportunities and support to pay attention to the structural limitations in the field of human rights, well-being and health protection they face, and to improve their access to services to reduce the risk of HIV infection;

¹ See the definition on the Sexual Health page at the WHO website at http://www.who.int/topics/sexual_health/ru/

being deeply convinced that the MSM/LGB/TG community involvement and leadership in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programs are essential, as they contribute to the establishment of trust and accounting for needs as well as create more favorable conditions for HIV prevention among MSM/LGB/TG people;

realizing that access to justice is a priority for MSM/LGB/TG people in view of frequent violations of their rights and includes protection from arbitrary arrests and detention, the right to a fair trial, freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, as well as the right to the highest attainable standard of health protection, including in prisons and detention facilities that requires cooperation between health care agencies, law enforcement agencies and non-governmental organizations;

reaffirming the principle of human rights and that their protection is the basis for implementation of integrated programs to combat HIV among MSM/LGB/TG people since the exercise of rights for health protection and for the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is inextricably linked to all other human rights and cannot be separated from them, and non-discrimination on grounds of SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity), sex, state of health and other characteristic, is an integral part of the principle of human rights;

guided by the Nothing About Us Without Us principle, which implies close involvement of MSM/LGB/TG people in activities aimed at fighting the HIV infection in the community at all its phases (planning — implementation — monitoring — evaluation);

recognizing self-government, autonomy, independence of HIV service and LGBT organizations and action groups in an effort to establish a dialogue and interaction with each other, mutual capacity building and the need for an individual approach to each of them;

noting the importance of openness and transparency of non-governmental organizations to the society in compliance with the security balance of both the organizations and their beneficiaries;

seeking to develop and improve policies and measures supported by reliable scientific approaches recommended by WHO and other international organizations;

seeking to develop effective and sustainable programs and organizations in the long run;

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

1. In the spirit of shared responsibility, we reaffirm our readiness to seek for consolidation of efforts of HIV service organizations and LGBT movement to protect the health and well-being of MSM/LGB/TG people by fighting the HIV epidemic among MSM/LGB/TG people, by developing meaningful participation of MSM/LGB/TG people, including those who live with HIV, and their leadership in this process.

2. We recognize that in order to effectively combat the HIV epidemic among MSM/LGB/TG in Russia HIV service and LGBT organizations should cooperate in five key areas: 1. Integrated prevention among MSM/LGB/TG people; 2. Assistance and treatment of MSM/LGB/TG people living with HIV; 3. Strengthening the MSM/LGB/TG community systems, with particular attention to encouraging leadership development among MSM/LGB/TG people, including those living with HIV; 4. Overcoming legal barriers and legal empowerment of MSM/LGB/TG people; 5. Creation of an enabling environment to implement HIV prevention, support and treatment programs for MSM/LGB/TG people.

3. We recognize that the purpose of cooperation between HIV service and LGBT organizations in the field of integrated HIV prevention among MSM/LGB/TG people is to increase the coverage of MSM/LGB/TG population with the integrated prevention services.

4. We recognize that the purpose of cooperation between HIV service and LGBT organizations in providing care and treatment for MSM/LGB/TG people living with HIV is to increase the availability of the necessary treatment, care and support in connection with HIV infection.
5. We recognize that the purpose of cooperation between HIV service and LGBT organizations in strengthening the community systems is to enhance the role of activists and community organizations in the development, provision, monitoring and evaluation of services and activities related to prevention, treatment, care and support for MSM/LGB/TG people as one of the key populations affected by the HIV epidemic. In achieving this goal, particular attention should be paid to encouraging leadership development among MSM/LGB/TG people, including those living with HIV.
6. We recognize that the purpose of cooperation between HIV service and LGBT organizations in overcoming legal barriers and legal empowerment is to raise legal awareness and civic responsibility of MSM/LGB/TG people and to create a favorable legal environment in order to conduct the full range of HIV prevention, care and treatment activities among MSM/LGB/TG population. One of the forms of interaction between HIV service and LGBT organizations in overcoming legal barriers and legal empowerment is cooperation in monitoring and documenting human rights violations on the grounds of SOGI, including in health care.
7. We recognize that the purpose of cooperation between HIV service and LGBT organizations in creating a favorable environment is to develop and implement a set of policies, activities and approaches aimed at improving the availability, accessibility, quality, efficiency and use of services for HIV prevention and treatment as well as ensuring fair coverage of such services.
8. We shall strive to ensure that the Russian Federation Ministry of Health and relevant agencies have adopted a strategy of preventive interventions among populations at higher risk for HIV, including MSM/LGB/TG people, relying on advanced WHO guidelines on working with key populations².
9. We recognize the importance of working together towards development, adoption and implementation at national level of specialized programs to combat the HIV epidemic among MSM/LGB/TG population with direct participation of MSM/LGB/TG people based on the principles of public health care priorities and human rights.
10. We express our willingness to work together to adopt a joint action strategy of HIV service and LGBT organizations to respond to the HIV epidemic among MSM/LGB/TG people in Russia.
11. We recognize that to combat the HIV epidemic among MSM/LGB/TG populations in Russia it is essential to interact with other communities, including the most vulnerable ones.
12. We urge MSM/LGB/TG-oriented business organizations to recognize their social responsibility and to contribute to the fight with the HIV epidemic among MSM/LGB/TG population in Russia.
13. We urge the HIV service and LGBT organizations that have not yet done so to recognize the importance of cooperation and take concrete steps to protect health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being of the LGBT communities, paying special attention to HIV among MSM/LGB/TG people in Russia, as well as to accede to the this Declaration.

² See Consolidated *guidelines on HIV prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care for key populations* (WHO, 2014); *Transgender people and HIV* (WHO, 2015).