

THE NAIROBI DECLARATION ON HARM REDUCTION DURING THE FIRST EAST AFRICAN HARM REDUCTION CONFERENCE

We, the Civil Society, National and Local governments, academia, Media, Human Rights organizations, Organizations of PWUD, activists, Private Sector and PWUD attending the First East African Harm Reduction Conference, from 27th February to 1st March 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya are committed to continued and scaled up support in investment to the Harm Reduction programs and a healthy future for all people of the Eastern African Region.

Recognizing the advances that are improving the health of our Youths and PWUDs, including:

- Growing Eastern Africa Governments' **acknowledgement** that widespread access to Harm Reduction services would support in reaching universal access targets and Support and the 90:90:90,
- Working to overcome legal and policy gaps by putting in place a Regional Harm Reduction policy, through the leadership of the East African Community and Drugs control authorities,
- Ministries of Health in the region, **recognition** of PWDUS, as a key population group that needs focused, evidence –based and human rights based HIV, TB and infectious diseases interventions,
- The efforts by the East African partners states in launching the first ten year- Regional Health investment priority framework (2018 -2028), committing to high impact investments in health, including research and Harm Reduction

Bearing in mind the recently ratified Sustainable Development Goal target of Universal Health Coverage and access where health is fundamental to social and economic development.

Acknowledging that broad-based, large body of evidence shows that harm reduction is effective in reducing the transmission of infectious diseases and improves the quality of life of people who use drugs, save lives, reduces crime and improves the human rights and dignity of people who use drugs

Reaffirming the Principles set out by the UN General Assembly has endorsed harm reduction as an essential HIV prevention measure in its Declaration of Commitment on AIDS and in the Political Declaration on AIDS in 2006.

Recognizing that despite progress, universal access to Harm Reduction services especially in African Countries, as stated UNAIDS is largely off track as indicated by the UNGASS report; but that with resolve can be reversed

Recalling that majority of Eastern African countries lack essential high impact Harm Reduction services especially Needle and Syringe programs, Hepatitis C treatment and Opioid Substitution Therapy; and where they are available, coverage is still poor, reaching far below the numbers needed to have an impact on the epidemic

Admitting that working to maintain and improve Harm Reduction policies, guidelines, services and practice to save lives, – that the current national budgetary allocations and mechanisms within the context of national health systems financing are inadequate:

We, the undersigned, call on the Eastern African Governments and International Organisations to:

1. Undertake a transparent review of the effectiveness of current drug policies in their respective Countries with regards to HIV and infectious diseases prevention and control
2. End the criminalization of PWUDs and the punitive legal frameworks that fuel HIV and infectious diseases transmission, overdose, mass incarceration and human rights violations

3. De-criminalize drug use, scale up evidence-based drug dependence treatment options
4. Ensure scaled and sufficient access across Eastern Africa to the core Harm Reduction interventions, such as needle syringe programs and opioid substitution therapy
5. Endorse and scale up funding for the implementation of the comprehensive package Harm Reduction Interventions in line with WHO, UNODC, UNITAIDS recommendations, including overdose prevention and outreach work
6. Ensure access to Hepatitis C diagnostics and treatment for PWUD
7. Ensure meaningful involvement of communities of PWUDs in developing, monitoring and implementing harm reduction services and policies that affect their lives
8. Promote partnerships between law enforcement agencies, criminal justice system, PWUDs, organizations supporting PWUDs to address the widespread inappropriate use of criminal sanctions against PWUDs and other key affected populations, and ensure that such partnerships are facilitated, supported and enabled to undertake their work successfully.
9. Renew their commitment and action towards the goal of universal access to comprehensive Harm Reduction services for PWUDs through the financing, implementation and scale-up of evidence-based harm reduction interventions
10. Commit to removing legal and policy barriers and particularly a reorientation of drug policies toward public health and human rights-based approaches.
11. Support Harm Reduction in Policies and practice and commit to funding all Harm Reduction interventions
12. Support the civil society working on Harm reduction interventions

This Declaration was developed by the participants at the First Eastern African Harm Reduction Conference
1st of March 2018