



Socialist International Women

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2010

DECLARATION

According to statistics from the UNAIDS (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS) some 33.4 million people worldwide live with HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and nearly half of them are women. It is also estimated that each year around 3 million people contract HIV and nearly as many people die of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).

Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to contracting HIV due to social, economic and biological reasons. Women aged 15-24 are three to four times more likely to acquire the virus than young men and rates of contracting the virus in women are rising in every region and in most countries.

Child marriage, sexual coercion and violence, women's lack of power to negotiate safe sex, other power imbalances and inequalities as well as poverty, mean that women and girls have no control over their sexual life. Very few girls and women in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have access to information, sex education and reproductive health services that would empower them against AIDS.

Therefore, on the occasion of International Women's Day, the Socialist International Women together with other women's organisations worldwide call on governments, health services and NGOs to give high priority at the XVIII International AIDS Conference (Vienna, Austria, from 18 – 23 July 2010) to the following demands concerning women and HIV/AIDS:

- Gender equality in education, employment, financial and legal matters (including property and inheritance rights);
- Accessible reproductive health services for women and girls, as well as access to testing, treatment, counselling, care and support;
- Access to methods of prevention such as male and female condoms;
- Legal action on violence against women, including sexual coercion and rape;
- Involvement of boys and men in HIV prevention measures and
- Respect and enforcement of Women's Human Rights.