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Monitoring UNGASS-AIDS Goals in Sexual and Reproductive Health

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Press Release III UNGASS-AIDS Forum South Africa
June 8th and 9th, 2009

Between June 8th and 9th there will take place in Cape Town, the III UNGASS Forum South Africa. The forum is coordinated by Mosaic Training, Service and Healing Centre for Women and Health Systems Trust in partnership with Gestos, an NGO from Recife, Brazil, that coordinates an international advocacy push on women?s sexual and reproductive health (SRH). The event will have the participation of leading representatives of South Africa?s health social movement, including NGOs, networks and possible governmental institutions to dialogue on the pressing issues of HIV/AIDS and SRH.
The aims of this forum are: 1) to strengthen a south-to-south community based research and advocacy network for monitoring public policies on women?s sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and HIV/AIDS; 2) to facilitate meaningful participation of civil society organization in the United Nations General Special Assembly on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS/ AIDS) monitoring actions at national level; 3) to disseminate information related to UNGASS/AIDS and International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD+15); and 4) to promote government?s accountability at regional and global level.
Forum ? In 2007 South Africa organized the I Forum and the result was the elaboration of a SRH and HIV/AIDS monitoring report based upon the commitments the country?s government undersigned at the UNGASS-AIDS, 2001, in New York.
The South Africa Forum team effort produced a report on the state of affairs of women?s sexual and reproductive health in the country, with findings that announced while South Africa has an impressive legal and policy framework, health systems challenges, lack of integration of HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and implementation of services have made it difficult to overcome challenges. Civil society representatives requested to include the alternative report in the national report sent to UNAIDS, but it was kindly refused.
The Ungass Forum concept is a Gestos? initiative for monitoring and evaluating public policies on women?s sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and HIV/AIDS in 16 countries from four continents - including African, Asian, Latin American, Caribbean and Eastern European countries. The project has indelible support from The Ford Foundation.
Within 18 months, thirty-one national meetings and one international leadership gathering, involving a total of 433 advocacy groups and worldwide networks, were set up. The results of this experience were included in the Monitoring UNGASS-AIDS Goals on Sexual and Reproductive Health, a comparative report launched last June, in New York, and officially sent to UNAIDS.
The idea for 2009 is to consolidate the advocacy work in Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Indonesia, Kenya, Nicaragua, Peru, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda, Ukraine and Uruguay, to include SRH as a priority area among social movements, HIV/AIDS donors, governments and UN agencies.
UNGASS - AIDS - Alarmed by the accelerating epidemic and its global impact, the United Nations General Assembly has decided to convene a special session on HIV/AIDS at the highest political level.
At the special session, held in 2001 and 2008, high-level national delegations discussed what action plans have proven most effective in addressing the AIDS situation in their own countries and what next steps are needed. Interactive

round-tables brought together government leaders, AIDS activists and experts and private sector partners to focus on key issues.

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