



HIV-Positive People are Demanding Right to Dignity

On the 24th May 2006, the Cambodian Alliance for Combating HIV/AIDS (CACHA) conducted press conference under topic “HIV-Positive People are Demanding Rights to Dignity” to draw the attention to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Cambodia. The alliance also demand from government, non-government and industry bodies, and the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS), a stronger response to combating HIV/AIDS in Cambodia and worldwide. Positive people need greater accountability and more effective approaches to meet the basic needs of people living with HIV/AIDS such as access to affordable drugs, employment opportunities, education, livelihood, healthcare, non-discrimination, women’s rights and right to housing.



Press Conference is delegated by Excellency Ho Naun, Member of the Permanent Committee of the National Assembly, Chairperson of Commission on Public Health, Social Work Labor and Women Affairs

This press conference had about 150 participants from different media (TV, Radio and International /local newspapers), People Living with HIV/AIDS Networks, Local/International NGOs, parliamentarian, District Governors, and Cambodian Alliance for Combating HIV/AIDS members.

People living with HIV/AIDS Raised Their Concerns



HIV-Positive People singing a song related to their concerns

People living with HIV/AIDS are treated with contempt and alienated by society, family, employers and health professionals. They appealed to government, donors, NGOs, the private sector and the general public to adopt policies and practices that eliminate discrimination and improve their situation. In addition, aid resource, due to lack of commitment and faulty policies, programs and implementation mechanisms, does not filter down to people living with HIV/AIDS. Moreover, it is not enough to provide programs, training and drugs if positive people do not have jobs, food and shelter. What people living with HIV/AIDS want is comprehensive response to their situation.



HIV-positive people raised their concerns and called for actions.

People living with HIV/AIDS lack access to affordable quality drugs. Antiretroviral treatment (ART), the primary hope for positive people whose condition has advanced to AIDS, is provided primarily to select people in urban areas, without any time commitment, or assistance for food and other basic needs.

Messages

The alliance also demanded PLHA'S right to dignity, elimination of discrimination/stigmatisation; rights of the poor countries to produce medicine; and transfer of technology and material to poor countries. On 24 May 2006, seven HIV-positive speakers addressed their issues and concerns around their health, livelihood, education, women's rights, discrimination/stigmatisation and aid. They shared their stories about dismissal from garment factories, their treatment as "monkeys" in drug trials, eviction from their homes by their families, denial of access to ARVs and healthcare, and alienation and separation from their children.

Media Coverage

This press conference was covered by six TV Channels, ten radio stations (FM/AM), and 25 International and local newspapers. Additionally, people living with HIV/AIDS were interviewed by different media. (See Annex)

The alliance also produced 15-minute TV spot in order to bring HIV-positive concern to UNGASS Review and High Level Meeting will be held from 31 May to 02 June 2006.



HIV-positive woman talked to reporter

Annex

May 25, 2006 media report on the press conference

Cambodge Soir
Cambodge

Cambodia Daily

Sida

Un bilan sévère sur la prise en charge des malades et des personnes contaminées

Après tant d'années de lutte contre le sida au Cambodge, malades et séropositifs pointent du doigt l'absence de progrès malgré les aides versées aux organisations internationales et locales dont ils sont la population cible. Ces personnes contaminées ont donc fondé une nouvelle ONG, l'Alliance cambodgienne pour la lutte contre le sida, pour tenter de coordonner les efforts et surtout mettre en évidence les problèmes auxquels ils sont chaque jour confrontés.

Une conférence organisée hier matin avait pour but de dresser un bilan, qui s'est révélé sévère, mettant en évidence quatre problèmes majeurs :

1- La discrimination des personnes contaminées et l'absence d'application de la loi contre cela. Sur ce point, trois intervenants venus de Chhba Ampov et Kampong sont venus témoigner de la discrimination dont ils font l'objet dans leur famille, leur voisinage ou dans leur communauté. "Même les bonzes nous refusent l'accès à la pagode parce que nous sommes contaminés par le virus, se plaint Ou Channy. Les gens ne

nous laissent même pas ramasser les canettes de bière." Kim Sy, elle, déclare n'avoir jamais vu quelqu'un pour l'informer ou la conseiller en matière de santé. Ces témoignages ont bouleversé Ho Nauu, présidente de la Commission de l'Assemblée nationale pour la santé et les affaires sociales qui semblait découvrir cette situation. "J'avais pleuré au Kenya en entendant la situation des malades du sida. Vous me faites de nouveau pleurer, a-t-elle reconnu. Soyez fort, vivez, moi je m'engage à rapporter vos problèmes", a-t-elle lancé avant de rappeler que la loi condamne ce type de discrimination mais n'est pas appliquée.

2- Le chômage et l'absence de formation professionnelle. Conséquences logiques de la discrimination : l'absence de travail. Les organisateurs de la conférence ont voulu démontrer l'absence, à tort, de formation professionnelle digne de ce nom. "Nous ne voulons pas ôter les noms des organisations inefficaces, a noté Dy Morny, membre de l'Alliance et représentant des Nations unies pour les programmes sur le sida. Nous re-

marquons simplement que ces organisations n'utilisent pas l'argent dans la bonne direction." Saing Ky, de l'ONG Care, a confirmé qu'il était impossible de répondre à tous les besoins dans toutes les régions du pays mais il a expliqué que Care venait de lancer un projet de formation à destination des malades les plus pauvres.

3- L'aide n'arrive pas aux intéressés. Sokha, contaminé, a réclamé haut et fort que les aides soient versées directement aux malades car les bénéfices qu'ils tireraient des fonds qui parviennent aux ONG sont minimes.

4- L'inégalité de traitement dans les politiques : les prostituées sont négligées, l'accès aux ARV pose problème. Duk Morny, représentante des prostituées du Women Network for Unity (WNU), s'est insurgée contre les politiques de lutte contre le sida négligeant les prostituées, en particulier celle des Etats-Unis qui ont décidé de ne pas appuyer ces programmes auprès de ce groupe. Elle a également proposé que les pays donateurs partagent leur technologie sur les ARV afin de



réduire les coûts des traitements. "Notre santé s'améliore avec les ARV, mais nous en avons besoin en permanence. Elle s'améliore vite mais, les malades ne peuvent pas vivre sans travail d'autant plus que leur sort est proie à la discrimination", résume Sokha avec rigueur. "Les travail des organisations liées aux Nations unies n'a pas répondu aux vrais besoins des malades, constate Dy Morny. Si les stratégies ne changent pas, les objectifs s'annuleront." L'ONU pour la réduction de la contamination par le sida ne serait pas atteints en 2015". C'est de la responsabilité d'échec que Dy Morny présentera à l'assemblée générale de l'Onu à New York à la fin du mois.

Chheang Bopha

Briefing

Sex Worker Union Fears Future AIDS Drug Trials

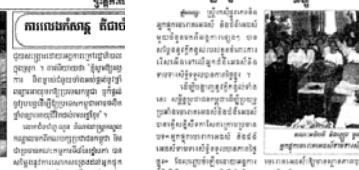
A sex workers' union official on Wednesday expressed fear that HIV/AIDS researchers may make renewed attempts to conduct a controversial drug trial among Cambodia's sex workers. Keo Tha, a member of the Women's Network for Unity secretary, said she worried that researchers from the US may return to Cambodia to start the trials of the anti-retroviral drug tenofovir under a different name. "We're afraid the drug will come again," she said following a Women's Agenda for Change conference on HIV/AIDS. Hun Sen asked the tests before they could begin in late 2004, after sex worker groups claimed the trial was unethical as participants were not being provided enough information about the drug before being asked to test it. Despite media reports about the drug in two major US newspapers in the past week, an official at the National Center for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STD Control said his clinic has had no involvement in the tenofovir studies since they were called off. "We must respect the wishes of our prime minister," said Khut Vothth, a doctor in NCHADS' research unit. (Sinhath Thome)

Koh Santepheap



អង្គការកុំឱ្យជំងឺអេដស៍រីករាលដាល
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Rasmei Kampuchea



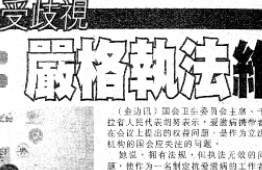
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