

## 1 - NGO Delegate Ebony Johnson at the International Women's Summit: What the HLM Means to Women

At the International Women's Summit in July 2011, NGO Delegate for North America Ebony Johnson and Juliana Davids of the World AIDS Campaign, delivered a workshop on behalf of the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS (GWCA) focusing on "What did the High Level Meeting on AIDS really mean for women and girls?".

Ebony was a member of the Civil Society Task Force, the key working group for the Civil Society Hearing, held in April 2011, and civil society participation at the High Level Meeting in June 2011.

Read the outcomes of the workshop below or download the [pdf](#).



### **Global Coalition on Women and AIDS at the International Women's Summit**

#### **I. Overview**

The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS (GCWA) engaged at the International Women's Summit, which took place in Zurich from 12-13 July 2011. The Summit

was organized by the World YWCA, a GCWA member. More information can be found at <http://www.worldywcaouncil.org/International-Women-s-Summit>.

The GCWA worked at many entry points throughout the Summit. Amongst those activities, the GCWA organized and delivered two interactive workshops that detailed below which provided space to examine the social drivers, political processes and community impact related women and the HIV Response. Additionally, the GCWA was honoured to support a leadership pre-conference for Women Living with HIV that focused on SRHR, HR and Advocacy.

## **II. Workshop "What did the High Level Meeting on AIDS really mean for Women?"**

The High Level Meeting on AIDS has been a process in which the GCWA has worked heavily throughout the year, reaching over 800 women through the virtual consultation conducted with the ATHENA Network and playing a convening role with women's organizations throughout the process. While the actual HLM has now passed, the GCWA remains committed to building on this process, sharing the outcomes, and discussing with partners how women's key asks in the context of HIV, as identified in the virtual consultation, can continue to be jointly advocated for.

Together with partners Ebony Johnson, of the Athena Network and a GCWA member, and Juliana Davids of the World AIDS Campaign, the GCWA delivered a workshop focusing on "What did the High Level Meeting on AIDS really mean for women and girls?"

Through a 90 minute session, participants were introduced to the history of the High Level Meeting, with a particular focus on the recent 2011 process. The presenters noted the successes of the language in the HLM Outcome Resolution noting the inclusion of treatment targets and the mention of specific key affected populations, among other issues. During the session, participants highlighted the significance of having confirmation of the importance of women's vulnerability to HIV and a commitment to gender equality in the resolution.

However, participants also stressed that further work is still needed to ensure that the needs and rights of women in the context of HIV are met. It was clearly articulated by participants that rights opposed to subjective moral definitions must guide our responses to HIV, and that culture must not be used as a barrier to upholding women's rights and protecting them from HIV, participants said.

Workshop participants also emphasised the need to ensure that governments are held accountable for existing commitments on HIV prevention, treatment care and

human rights. It was proposed that World YWCA and other women's organizations harness their political power by contacting their respective government offices to engage in dialogues on women and HIV and inquiring about the status of multi-sectoral commitments on health, education, human rights and throughout the spectrum of areas that impact women, girls and HIV.

Participants noted that greater strides must be taken to ensure the meaningful participation of all women, and particularly women and girls living with HIV in all aspects of policy, planning, service provision and evaluation.

In addition, the importance of achieving a target which specifically focuses on women, beyond vertical transmission, was emphasized. "Women must be valued as women, not only as mothers" was a message that strongly resonated.

The session concluded with an opportunity for participants to brainstorm on what they as advocates can do to further successful implementation of the HLM commitments and ensure that HIV remains high on the agenda. Participants' recommendations included:

- Inform women in all their diversity about policy documents in simplified language, using existing networks at global, regional and country level
- Support women in translating expected policy outcome in to country-level advocacy actions
- Involve women in National Strategic Planning processes
- Involve women in Monitoring & Evaluation at the local, national, regional and community levels
- Engage with governments on their commitments to HIV, such as through letter writing and joint monitoring with partners
- Assess which in-country organizations are working on which areas and strengthen partnerships
- Share Best Practices across countries and Regions
- YWCA could post the stories of WLWHIV experiences
- Have radio shows with HIV/AIDS programming and reproductive health information, building on existing successful models
- YWCA could start a database of young women and WLWHIV to serve as a reference group which would be consulted strategic direction and messaging
- Support and contribute to build capacity of WLWHIV on health and human rights issues beyond HIV

- Dedicated employment opportunities within the World YWCA for young women and WLWHIV
- Dedicated World YWCA Board seats for young women and WLWHIV
- Greater inclusion of young women and WLWHIV in decision-making positions across respective women's organizations
- Each YWCA to write a letter to their respective Ministries noting awareness of the HLM Outcome Document, a willingness to engage and seek information to guide future actions.

The GCWA collected email addresses of all participant and will continue to build on the expertise of participants through bi-direction information sharing and consultation to build on these discussions.

### **III. Workshop "Advocating for Ourselves: Using the UNAIDS Agenda for Accelerated Action to Build Our Regional/National Capacity to Serve Women and Girls"**

Throughout this workshop, facilitated by former GCWA Steering Committee member Anna Forbes, participants were supported in advancing their work by highlighting the linkages to the UNAIDS Agenda for Accelerated for Women, Girls, Gender Equality, and HIV. The Agenda can be [downloaded](#).

The workshop shared basic advocacy tools for using the Agenda, including methods for determining:

- how a key issue is perceived locally,
- who must be influenced in order to address it, and
- what resources and potential allies can be mobilized to exert such influence collectively.

Case studies were also presented to highlight peer organizations' successful use of these techniques. Then, in small groups, participants had the opportunity to discuss key issues for women as they link to the Agenda and potential opportunities.

At the conclusion of the session, participants indicated an interest in remaining in touch with UNAIDS and the GCWA to continue engaged around the Agenda. A commitment in this regard has been made and we look forward to future dialogues.