Global consultation on HIV and Sex Work
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Introduction

Background

Sex workers are female, male and transgender adults, 18 years and older, who receive money or goods in exchange for consensual sexual services, either regularly or occasionally. Globally, sex workers are estimated to be 13 times more likely to acquire HIV compared to adults of the general population.\(^1\) Progress towards preventing new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths among sex workers has been uneven between countries and regions.

Despite being disproportionately affected by HIV, in many countries sex workers remain neglected by efforts to expand access to HIV prevention and treatment. Intersecting types of stigma and discrimination related to sex work, real or suspected HIV status and sexual identity, physical and sexual violence, as well as punitive laws and policies that target sex workers, increase their vulnerability to HIV. Stigma and discrimination limit the availability, access and uptake of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support among sex workers and their clients.

The United Nations Secretary-General has consistently called on all countries to honor their commitments to enact or enforce supportive legal and policy frameworks and remove discriminatory laws and policies, including those targeting sex workers. UNAIDS supports the decriminalization of sex work, as expressed in various United Nations documents, including the 2012 Guidance Note on HIV and Sex Work and the Joint United Nations Statement on Ending Discrimination in Healthcare Settings.

A global consultation was held at UNAIDS, in Geneva, Switzerland from 27 to 28 November 2019, bringing together community members, government representatives, UN agencies, academia and donor agencies engaged in the HIV response among sex workers. The meeting aimed at sharing updates on actions taken to accelerate the response, exchanging on new programmatic and epidemic developments and defining priorities in HIV prevention and sex work for the next two years, in line with the commitments made in the global HIV Prevention 2020 Roadmap.

Opening session

The consultation was opened by UNAIDS Acting Deputy Executive Director, Tim Martineau, who noted that the last global consultation on HIV and sex work took place in 2014 and that there was urgent need to instill new energy in to the agenda. In a context where new waves of punitive legislation is being put in place and where the space for civil society is shrinking, he highlighted that the main aim of this consultation was to define the global priorities for the sex work agenda and advise the United Nations on direction for the next two years.

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Update on the legal and policy environments and re-affirmation of the 2012 guidance note

Overview of the global policy environment

Ruth Morgan Thomas, the Global Coordinator of the Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP), painted a somber picture of the policy environment. The rise of anti-trafficking laws, the increasing adoption of the Swedish model that criminalizes clients of sex workers and third parties, the US anti-prostitution pledge restricting funding to organizations working with sex workers, the crack-down on brothels and other developments are making the legal environment for sex work more difficult. Legal provisions restricting sex workers to advertise their services online such as the SESTA/FOSTA laws in the United States were noted to contribute to this environment. Nevertheless, sex workers are resourceful and have always found ways to work around laws and restrictions and provide for their livelihoods.

Neil McCulloch from NSWP presented a detailed legal mapping of the legal environment relating to sex work carried out in 2016. The findings also showed some discrepancies between the categorizations of the legal and regulatory data collected by NSWP and for the UNAIDS Key Populations Atlas, reflecting different approaches to collecting and analyzing regulatory environments and the complexity of the legal landscape around sex work. NSWP announced they will post the map on the website in 2019. Through its members at the national level, NSWP is planning to do deep-dive case studies on the impact of laws and regulations as experienced by sex workers. Although not included in the NSWP legal mapping, participants noted the disproportionate implications of other laws such as punitive drug laws, vagrancy or loitering laws and anti-homosexuality laws on sex workers.

UNAIDS 2012 guidance note on HIV and sex work

Emily Christie of UNAIDS presented the 2012 guidance note on HIV and sex work and briefed participants about the discussions of the Steering Committee on HIV and Sex Work (SC), that took place one day earlier, reaffirming the validity of this guidance. Given the current hostile political environment against sex workers, the SC has found that there is no need for a significant update to the guidance note, but to reinvigorate interest and raise its profile. The SC has thus decided to add a new annex to the note – under the UNAIDS joint programme logo - that would require minimal endorsement and clearance from other agencies. The annex would present a summary of the 2012 guidance note and include new evidence, new prevention technologies, the 2016 political declaration targets, references to relevant Sustainable Development Goals and the correct use of agreed terminology. The SC will develop and disseminate the annex document accompanied by a slide set presenting the guidance note for advocacy purposes and translate them in the different UN languages. Evaluation will be important to see how much national country programmes use the guidance note.
Key discussion points

The following points were raised by participants:

- The current definition of sex workers as “female, male and transgender adults and young people who receive money or goods in exchange for sexual services, either regularly or occasionally…” is the one agreed upon by the sex work community and it takes into consideration the fact that not all sex workers identify themselves as such. While this definition broadly includes people involved in transactional sex and people in hotspots, the Guidance Note does not programmatically cover these categories but rather focuses on the human rights-based approach required for everyone. In this context, the work of the UNAIDS Reference Group on HIV and Human Rights was highlighted. It aims to strengthen the capacity of governments, civil society and the private sector to protect and promote human rights in relation to HIV, and to best operationalize human rights including in the area of HIV and sex work.\(^2\) UNAIDS has lately produced guidance on Transactional Sex, which indicates the difference between sex work and transactional sex.

- United Nations conventions and human rights treaties classify all forms of the involvement of people under the age of 18 in sex work as sexual exploitation and abuse. UN Guidelines on young people who sell sex attempts to address the gap in programming for young people and to guarantee their health and protection needs but do not include decriminalization and legal protection. NSWP advocates for adult sex workers, however, it has published a policy brief on young sex workers (18-29), which also documents the impact of legislation on young people under the age of 18 who sell sex and calls for programmers to ensure that they have access to information and services and that their health needs are met.\(^3\)

\(^{2}\) [http://www.hivhumanrights.org/](http://www.hivhumanrights.org/)

\(^{3}\) [https://www.nswp.org/sites/nswp.org/files/Policy%20Brief%20Young%20Sex%20Workers%20-%20NSWP%2C%202016.pdf](https://www.nswp.org/sites/nswp.org/files/Policy%20Brief%20Young%20Sex%20Workers%20-%20NSWP%2C%202016.pdf)
Global update on the AIDS epidemic among sex workers

Gleanings from the Global AIDS Monitoring System

Keith Sabin of UNAIDS shared the data annually collected by UNAIDS about the HIV epidemic among sex workers and explained the modelling behind the estimates produced by the organization. He showed that new HIV infections have not been falling among sex workers and global targets are being missed. The extremely high prevalence of HIV among sex workers in Sub Saharan Africa, the heterogeneity within a country, and the low quality of available data was highlighted. Participants were alerted that new HIV infections among sex workers and their importance to the epidemic are underestimated because of the transient nature of sex work. Circular migration in and out of sex work is underappreciated and the data misses sex workers that leave sex work or enter it for a short period.

Figure 1
HIV prevalence among sex workers in sub Saharan Africa, most recent data, 2013-17
HIV burden and legal determinants among cisgender female sex workers

Stefan Baral of Johns Hopkins University showed some sobering statistics about violence, stigma and denial of care experienced by female sex workers. He showed that legal status of sex work is consistently associated with HIV infection, with higher risk of new infection among sex workers living in criminalized settings or in settings where no legal mechanism of sex work is in place. The association between stigma and HIV infection among sex workers varies by legal status with higher risk of infection if stigma is present in criminalized settings. These findings highlight the importance of considering stigma and structural determinants alongside HIV related outcome indicators.

Results presented showed the proportion of new HIV infections attributable to sex work to be more pronounced if a longer time frame is considered compared to modes of transmission studies that assess the distribution of HIV infection among sex workers over a one-year period. He suggested the need to use models that take a longer view of transmission dynamics to inform HIV prevention and treatment scale up. In dynamic transmission models, HIV prevention among sex workers would be even more cost effective and findings could be used to advocate with donors in order to inform funding decisions.

**Figure 2**
Average Percentage of Female Sex Workers Reporting Experiences of Physical Violence, 2006-2017

Presentation by Stefan Baral, 27 November 2018
Key discussion points

The following points were raised by participants:

▪ The most common perpetrators of violence against sex workers are their partners and police officers. In Senegal, some registered sex workers face continuous discrimination from policemen who take advantage of their access to the sex workers’ files to arrest them and receive bribes for releasing them. Sex workers also face stigma in health care settings by service providers who treat them differently and place them in separate rooms. Such measures push sex workers out of care.

▪ Size estimates for sex workers are increasingly available but quality varies widely. The different approaches present challenges for data use in design, implementation and evaluation of programmes. Available data when used to develop a global picture lacks nuance as it does not tack into account the heterogeneity of sex workers. Data nuance should be sought at country level as any programmatic response at national and subnational level should consider sex workers in their diversity and not treat them as a universal category.

▪ Community members should be involved in the modelling results to ensure that the full spectrum of risk behaviours is captured, and they should be able to understand the data. There is need for data driven training that equips the communities on data use and help them advocate with government agencies.

Recommendations

▪ Presenters were asked to add slides to their presentation providing information about condom use and treatment coverage among sex workers, since these two components are missing from the global overview.
Update on progress, challenges and lessons learnt

The Global Fund

David Traynor of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria outlined the organization’s current strategy, policy and financing settings as they relate to the global response for sex workers. He gave a number of examples where such settings are aimed at strengthening the Global Fund’s support for comprehensive sex worker programmes across its portfolio. He also recognized the complexity that comes with the geographic diversity of Global Fund grants and emphasized that consistent community-led outreach models needed to be implemented.

The Global Fund policy environment is relatively strong in its recognition of the importance of evidence-informed, rights-based and community-driven responses for key populations, including sex workers in their diversity. Significant progress in terms of high-level policies has been clear in the past 4 years with key populations better integrated across core business areas of the Fund and scale-up of comprehensive programs for key populations explicitly mentioned in the Global Fund’s strategy 2017-2022. Corporate level key performance indicators (KPI) on funding and service coverage for key populations have been incorporated for the first time in this strategy cycle. Recognizing and in response to persistent weaknesses in data relating to key populations, including sex workers, in collaboration with UNAIDS and the WHO, the Global Fund integrated an adjustment into its allocation model for the period 2017-2019 to ensure its HIV funding better reflects the burden these communities face and to account for increasing incidence.

The Global Fund is fully committed to the SWIT. It has aligned its application templates used by countries for planning sex worker programmes to the SWIT and the tool is the basis for developing the sex workers technical briefs on best practice in planning and implementing sex worker programmes. The Global Fund provides financial support to NSWP as a contribution to the networks mission to strengthen regional and national sex worker organizational capacity to engage with Global Fund related processes. Thus far NSWP has worked to support over 70 sex worker led networks and constituencies via this programme, using the SWIT as a critical entry point to drive strengthened community led and rights based programmes within the Global Fund grants via representation at the country level (e.g. through CCMs, country dialogues).

The Global Fund finances HIV programmes in 117 countries. The scope and degree of investments going to sex worker programmes varies depending on other funders on the ground and their extent of support. In the last funding cycle (2014-16), an estimated 250 million USD was invested in sex worker programmes over a three year period.

It was emphasized that while increased funding for sex worker led programmes and organization was a critical priority, this must come with substantive change in ‘how’ funding is provided to ensure that resources are accessible to community-led organizations and does not come with overwhelming reporting burden and bureaucracy.
LINKAGES

Robyn Dayton of LINKAGES, USA, gave an overview of the USAID/PEPFAR-funded programme on the Continuum of HIV Services for Key Populations Affected by HIV (LINKAGES). Implemented in 30 countries with a performance period from June 11, 2014 to December 31, 2021, LINKAGES aims to increase the availability of and demand for HIV services for key populations and strengthen national government and civil society capacity to deliver these services.

LINKAGES: Addressing overall structural barriers across the cascade of HIV prevention, care and treatment services by key populations

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<tr>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Safety of implementers to reach and support those most at risk</td>
<td>▪ Project-wide safety and security audit of CBO partners</td>
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<td>▪ Violence from law enforcement, intimate partners, clients</td>
<td>▪ Technical assistance and exchanges to build capacity of CBO partners and demonstrate need for dedicated funding</td>
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<td>▪ Violence from law enforcement, intimate partners, clients</td>
<td>▪ Law enforcement trainings</td>
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<td>▪ Integration of violence response skills into HCW and peer training</td>
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The Netherlands

Monique Kamphuis from the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Geneva highlighted that improving and protecting the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of key populations, including sex workers, has been a priority of the Netherlands for many years. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) funds key populations programmes, forges strategic partnerships and brokers all key populations to raise their voice. It has formed 7 partnerships with Dutch CSOs on SRHR, running from 2016 to 2020. €215 million are available under this SRHR Partnership Fund. One example is the ‘Hands Off’ programme with the Aids Fonds, which aims to contribute to the reduction of violence and HIV infection among sex workers in Southern Africa. ‘Hands Off’ uses police sensitization, rapid response methods and sex worker protection systems as intervention strategies, and deploys data gathering and litigation to support violence victims. A main challenge facing the programme, is the difficulty to disseminate data and the lengthy process to get ethical clearance for collecting data.

Aids Fonds

Anke Groot of Aids Fonds presented the ‘Bridging the Gap’ (BTG) programme, funded by the Dutch MOFA. BTG aims at achieving universal access to HIV/STI prevention, treatment, care and support for sex workers, LGBT people and people who use drugs. BTG is complemented by the PITCH (Partnership to Inspire, Transform, and Connect the HIV response), a strategic partnership between Aids Fonds, the International HIV/AIDS Alliance and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which focuses on capacity building and support to civil society to champion the rights and needs of key populations. BTG and PITCH are complementary programmes advocating for law enforcement to change their practices towards sex workers and apply positive action to support the sex work community.

Examples of other projects supported by the Dutch government include the SRHR-HIV Knows No Borders project which is implemented in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Save the Children Netherlands (SC) and the University of the Witwatersrand.
School of Public Health (WSPH) to focus on migration-affected communities in six countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region including Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia.

**Key discussion points:**

The following points were raised by participants:

- It is important to develop a clear overview on the countries and parts of countries supported by different funders, presenting information on programme reach (number of sex workers reached, programme areas, etc.) as well as the extent to which funders consistently use the different elements of the SWIT, including indicators and measurements used to evaluate their programmes.

- All organizations that receive Dutch funding are requested to report on results of their development and humanitarian activities using the international aid transparency initiative’s (IATI’s) platform. IATI is an online database using indicators and objectives where progress can be monitored and where coverage of programmes by different partners can be accessed. UNAIDS, UNFPA, the Alliance and Aids Fonds are already using it.

**Recommendations**

- A mapping analysis should be conducted to determine, in which countries different partners are implementing sex work projects.

- A mechanism should be established to deal with emergencies faced by sex worker programmes at country level, not only in terms of human rights violations but also with regard to withdrawal of funding by donors and programme closures. Funding should not be stopped without sufficient transition time.
New media and sex work

Neil McCulloch of NSWP presented the findings of a global study, undertaken by NSWP and commissioned by UNAIDS in 2016, on the use of new information and communication (ICT) technologies by sex workers and their potential for HIV programmes. The study has found that new ICT is a double-edged sword. It provides a solution to several of the problems which sex workers have traditionally experienced. It makes it easier and safer for sex workers to work flexible hours, manage their business without third parties, mobilize and raise awareness of their issues, screen clients, avoid police and other benefits. Nevertheless, it poses new and potential risks, particularly in terms of maintaining privacy and confidentiality.

KaiThi Win of APNSW, Myanmar, presented findings from another study conducted in 2017 by NSWP, APNSW and AMA Myanmar on ICT use among sex workers with the objective to develop a technology-based intervention. The study confirmed that most sex workers in the country are using social networks like Facebook and Messenger to communicate. The study reiterated the positive impacts of ICT use including reducing police arrests and avoiding police harassment, sharing information about unknown clients, prompting community mobilization, helping to reach sex workers and service providers, etc. It also reiterated the challenges of privacy or blackmailing. The iMonitor application is used by APNSW/AMA to help sex workers to receive information on where to access condoms, HIV testing, counselling and treatment and other key services, report on stock-outs of HIV products and on violence and human rights violations.

Elian Aditya of LINKAGES Indonesia presented an innovative and complex community-led web-based platform, which uses three online outreach approaches to meet three different service delivery preferences of key populations (social network outreach, social influencer outreach and social profile outreach). The tool enables users to assess their risk for HIV and make health service appointments booking at 10 participating clinics. While focus is currently on testing, the application will be expanded to include other components including ordering subsidized condoms online, legal aid and gender-based violence services, and provision of user feedback.

Kerry Mangold of South Africa National AIDS Council (SANAC) made a commentary on the utilization of new ICT by sex workers in South Africa, emphasizing that ICT could be used for the advocacy side of programming. She explained that Smart phones are increasingly used by sex workers and that there are some good new media applications, sophisticated software, many interested partners, and it is easy to engage the public sector in it. An app for LGBTI communities is available that allows people to report on human rights violations and hate crimes. The biggest challenge remains related to ICT literacy among sex workers and the apprehension of the sex workers over security breaches.

Anke Groot from Aids Fonds commented on the successful Bridging the Gap programme where outreach to sex workers and their clients is done online and is partially linked to a hotline for social and clinical support and online referral. She spoke about the easiness of doing research among gay men and other men who have sex with men online and the tracking of ARV use among sex workers who are lost to follow up through SMS messages.
While new ICT provides an opportunity to report human rights violations, online recruitment of clients bears the risk of increased violence.

**Key discussion points**

The following points were raised by participants:

- Concern over the security of data collected on sex workers and how it can be negatively used to target them was restated in the discussions and questions were raised on how current successful programmes guarantee that the data is kept secure and safe. The question of data security is addressed by the programme in Indonesia by using a system of unique identifiers that do not reflect the real names or addresses of the beneficiaries. Communities recommended hiring a hacker to test the security of the platform and provide recommendations on the parts of the security system that require improvement.

- Participants were further alarmed by campaigns and legal provisions (SESTA/FOSTA) to prevent sex workers from advertising their services online, and policing sex workers’ online activity. Emphasis was placed on the need to gather evidence for the relative safety that online spaces or mobile applications potentially offer.

- It is important to make sure that the urgency to innovate is not for the sake of innovation but for benefitting the concerned populations. Using ICT in outreach imposes programmatic challenges in terms of connecting sex workers reached online to actual services, monitoring and follow up on their access to these services. Furthermore, many sex workers in African countries can only afford to use cheap phones for the purpose of their work rather than smart phones that can be easily confiscated/stolen. New ICT initiatives should be community led and fit the needs of sex workers.

**Recommendation**

- Given the existing threats affiliated with the use of new ICT by sex workers, there was no consensus about the need for the UN to issue global guidance on new media technologies and HIV programmes with sex workers. Nevertheless, a broader discussion on data security, in which community voices are represented is needed and some implementers, donors and governments could benefit from guidance and standards being set on data safety and security. **It was emphasized that** evidence needed to be gathered on the relative safety that online spaces or mobile applications potentially offer.
Country responses to HIV among sex workers

Representatives from selected countries including Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Myanmar presented their national programmes for sex workers, all showing that they have gone through an analysis or mapping of the situation, defined some basic programme packages and reached some degree of coverage. They acknowledge the need to take into account the heterogeneity of sex workers in designing programmes and working with communities throughout all steps of the programme.

Uduak Daniels of the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) in Nigeria highlighted the importance of conducting a realistic analysis of restrictive policy environments at local level as well as timely redress of unfriendly health settings to motivate sex workers to access and uptake services. She also emphasized the need to have a population-specific costed implementation plan that provides guidance and can be used as a tool for resource mobilization.

Helgar Musyoki of the National AIDS Control Council (NACC) of Kenya showed some of the requirements for success including strong government commitment and ownership of the programme, existence of coordination structures including at subnational level, establishment of a strong technical support unit to scale up effective interventions, building technical competence, as well as close collaboration with community organizations and sustained funding.

Lebowa Malaka of the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) presented the progress made in the sex workers’ programme in South Africa, bolstered by the development of a national sex workers HIV plan. He showed that all progress reviews in South Africa depend on Global Fund data, indicating the scope for joint efforts to obtain a fuller picture from all partners.

Oussama Tawil of UNAIDS Myanmar explained that Myanmar has entered its third generation of prevention work for key populations and with community-based organizations and sex work networks existent in the country at both national and sub-national level. While there is scale up of services, there also is a push for policy change for greater effectiveness and sustainability coinciding with a review of prevention efforts for key populations in 2019.

Primrose Matambandazo from the Centre for Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Research (CeSHHAR) in Zimbabwe gave some insights about the national sex worker programme, which has been functioning despite the criminalization of sex work in the country. Based on peer educators, the programme has been scaled up from 1 static and 5 mobile clinics to 10 static clinics and 29 mobile ones. It has recently started implementing drop in centers but there is yet no single one-stop shop from which sex workers can obtain all needed services and hence there are difficulties in referrals to government clinics. More scale up is needed but funding is limited and there are problems of coordination between implementing partners.

John Mathenge of HOYMAS, Kenya, stressed the need for building capacities of communities and strengthening partnerships between CBOs and the government. He also highlighted the
importance of addressing the needs of young sex workers who are left out of services, unable to access commodities like condoms due age-related restrictions.

Key discussion points

The following points were raised by participants:

▪ Good country examples and lessons need to be shared with neighboring countries with weaker programme performance.

▪ Calls for reaching and including young people selling sex below 18 in programmes persist.

▪ Programmes should address the needs of male and transgender sex workers, as well as partners of sex workers and clients of sex workers.

▪ Kenya reported on a study called “Transition” which identified conditions in which 14 to 24 year old girls enter sex work (including through coercion and force) and social support mechanisms that were established. The NAC is also working with other social services programmes like DREAMS to ensure programming for young sex workers.

Recommendation

▪ The UN should augment its advocacy for sex workers. Sex workers in their diversity should take a leading role in the HIV response in their communities and the lead on the design, implementation, advocacy and resource mobilization for the response.
Lessons learnt from scaling up sex worker and HIV programmes

James Blanchard of the University of Manitoba provided observations on changes in the programming environment for sex workers and new trends in the global response related to sex worker programmes. While the early emphasis of the response was on community mobilization and activism, the response is now driven more by innovations and new discoveries rather than community priorities. Funding allocations for sex worker programmes started to reach scale but since reaching a plateau were characterized by uncertainty. The last 10 years have also witnessed an emerging occurrence of normative guidance, like the SWIT, and a shift in focus from behavioural / biomedical to “structural” interventions, and back to biomedical interventions (TasP, PrEP).

The HIV burden among female sex workers and the major gaps in current sex worker programmes was elaborated and the effectiveness of community-led programmes highlighted. It was also demonstrated how community mobilization and empowerment is imperative to reach scale and reduce HIV risk.

Reflecting on the broader policy considerations, the presentation showed that the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and Universal Health Coverage (UHC) have become dominant parts of the discourse of global health but also among country leaders (e.g. on the localization of SDG agenda). He stressed the need to think about the broader SDG agenda and how they relate to sex workers, e.g. ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health services, achieving UHC (the leaving no-one behind agenda), achieving gender equality, including reductions in gender-based violence, and ensuring equal opportunity (rights agenda).

Key discussion points

The following points were raised by participants:

▪ In many contexts, peer educators are challenged by prescriptive targets and timelines set by donors. If these targets are not met, peer educators are accused of not providing quality peer education and may lose their jobs. Prescriptive programmes can limit the flexibility and responsiveness of peer led interventions.

▪ Most sex worker programmes are funded by PEPFAR that has a set of targets to meet in order to define the next cycle of funding. These targets primarily measure access to treatment and testing and do not account for community components and the massive efforts taken to mobilize sex workers to access services and build relationships. It would be useful for the community to map the implementation of the different components of the SWIT in these programmes and discuss with PEPFAR the elements in the SWIT they need to support.

▪ Trying to apply all SDGs to sex worker programming is difficult and too complex. There needs to be prioritization and some trainings to sex workers organizations including on the different SDG themes. Each sex work community needs to determine which SDGs are important for them including SDG 8 (labour and decent work agenda).
• Guidance on how to work with young people who sell sex is needed for implementers who fear having to withdraw projects because of supporting young sex workers.

• Spaces should be opened for sex workers who have children and family-based approaches need to be integrated into services in order to support children of sex workers. NSWP will publish a paper with the International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD) to address the issues of stigma and discrimination that key populations experience, including the right to have and care for children.

• The evolution of funding in the last years has had a massive impact on service delivery as it caused significant changes in the geographic locations of programmes. Service delivery shifted from towns to high density areas in major urban centers leaving the rural areas and smaller towns without coverage. Organizations with access to bigger donor funding ended up relying exclusively on one large prescriptive donor, supporting only a minimum package of services, while capacities to deal with several donors were lacking.

**Recommendations**

• Guidance and technical strategies should be developed to incorporate and address SDGs in the context of sex work.

• When talking about the needs of sex workers and their families and children it should be recognized that not all children of sex workers are vulnerable.
The Global HIV Prevention Coalition and Road Map: relevance for sex worker programmes

Karl Dehne of UNAIDS briefed participants about the Global HIV Prevention Coalition (GPC), the HIV prevention 2020 road map, as well as the engagement of sex workers in global and national coalitions. He described the relevance of the GPC and the road map for sex worker programmes and presented examples of country prevention scorecards for sex workers, which aim to measure and track prevention progress.

Sally Shackleton of the International HIV/AIDS Alliance spoke about her organization’s efforts to support civil society to learn more and engage with the prevention coalition processes at national, regional and global levels. The Alliance conducted a series of workshops with communities and key populations’ service providers to ensure they were sufficiently involved in coalition processes and participated in the establishment of national prevention coalitions. Following this, the Alliance supported participants in 6 countries - India, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda, Ukraine and Zimbabwe - to develop shadow reports to provide better insight on where countries stand in terms of the implementation of the 10 action points of the HIV prevention 2020 road map from a civil society perspective. The reports highlight limited commitment to expand key populations’ programmes; gaps in quality information; patchy contribution, or lack of engagement of key populations in national processes; limited tracking of changes in the legal and policy environments and human rights abuses by the governments. The development of technical assistance plans and implementation of new accountability mechanisms including community-based tools are not yet explored. Official reporting remains weak on financing and in cases where financing dialogues have taken place communities have been excluded.

Key discussion points
The following points were raised by participants:

▪ The political declaration target of ensuring that ‘75% of people living with, at risk of or affected by HIV benefit from HIV-sensitive social protection’ is a prevention related target that is of relevance to sex workers. UNAIDS has developed an HIV and social protection assessment tool that is used for a quick scan of existing social protection programmes and their sensitivity (or lack of) to the HIV response in a given country and location. Sex workers should be involved in social protection assessments and be informed on how to access social protection mechanisms.

▪ Most programmes for and with key populations in Africa are funded by GF/PEPFAR and there is minimum investment in or shift to domestic funding. To ensure that these programmes do not disappear with the ending of donor funding, it is important to prioritize and prepare for social contracting in some countries, following the examples of India, Mexico and Ukraine.
▪ Many African countries are facing a condom crisis as a result of international donors defunding of condom social marketing companies. This should be reversed and funding partners and governments need to sufficiently coordinate on how to sustain availability of condoms outside health facilities for key populations.

▪ Global partners should strengthen their advocacy at the international level to ensure there is an active conversation within the UN General Assembly and treaty bodies on changing the social and legal barriers around sex work.
Strengthening implementation of the Sex Worker Implementation Tool (SWIT)

The SWIT – a tool for advocacy and programming

Ruth Morgan Thomas presented on the community-led evaluation of the roll out of the SWIT and assessment of meaningful involvement of sex workers.

In a collaborative effort, bringing together sex worker representatives from five regions, implementing organizations including LINKAGES and Bridging the Gap as well as international and UN partners such as the Global Fund, UNFPA, UNDP, WHO and UNAIDS, a community-led evaluation framework was developed in 2017. The framework will be used by sex workers to monitor the adoption and roll out of the SWIT and aims to highlight gaps in comprehensive rights-based service delivery.

Meaningful involvement of sex workers in programmes on country level is particularly important in implementing and evaluating the SWIT and to strengthen sustainability of programmes.

Meaningful involvement of sex workers

1. Sex workers choose how they are represented, and by whom
2. Sex workers choose how they engage in the process
3. Sex workers choose whether to participate or not
4. Sex workers have an equal voice in how partnerships are managed
5. A transparent process for decision-making exists and allows time for consultation (between sex worker-led organisations and/or between sex worker-led organisations and their constituencies).
6. Clear Terms of Reference exist for all individuals involved in the process to indicate that they represent their constituencies, and not their personal interests
7. Sex workers and partners have equal voice and power
8. Sex workers are not only beneficiaries of programmes but are involved at all levels in programmes (design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, management, advisory committees, governance) and policy development and review.

It particularly focuses on the degree of implementation by different stakeholders involved in the HIV response among sex workers: sex worker-led organizations, non-governmental

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4 NSWP. Community-led evaluation framework for the roll-out of the sex worker implementation tool and meaningful involvement of sex workers, 2018.
organizations, Global Fund-supported programmes, government programmes and United Nations agencies.

Since the development of the evaluation framework pilot evaluations have taken place in four countries. Overall, NSWP highlighted that while some positive change was visible in terms of SWIT implementation capacity building among sex workers and other stakeholders was required. Conclusions from pilot countries further point to the need for training of UN staff on the SWIT and other key population implementation tools, to be able to effectively advocate with governments and other stakeholders for rights-based programming. Governments and non-governmental organizations should align their HIV and health strategies and programmes to the SWIT and improve funding and capacity building for enhanced service delivery by sex-worker led organizations. At the same time, sex worker-led organizations should raise awareness about the SWIT among their members and be supported in monitoring its implementation. Findings from pilot countries also indicated that sex workers and sex worker-led organizations were still not always recognized as experts, hampering meaningful involvement. NSWP therefore called upon UNAIDS and the Co-sponsors to consistently engage them as community experts in capacity building programmes.

Sex worker-led evaluation of SWIT implementation and country perspectives

Miriam Edwards of the Caribbean Sex Work Coalition (CSWC) shared her experiences in the roll-out and uptake of the SWIT in the Caribbean, a region which remains affected by stigma, discrimination and violence against the sex worker community. CSWC has provided capacity building on the SWIT in six countries, some of which had not yet been aware of the tool at all. Activities included the empowerment of peers, trainings for Ministries of Health, health care providers, advocacy workshops with police and migration officers and engagement with parliamentarians and country coordinating mechanisms (CCM) in diverse areas such as addressing violence, filing court cases against perpetrators or illegal prosecution, and developing Global Fund grant proposals. According to Miriam, gradual progress is visible in some countries. For instance, in Antigua, a change in immigration laws that had disadvantaged sex workers took place following the involvement of key actors in SWIT trainings.

Nataliia Isaiieva of the Sex Workers’ Rights Advocacy Network for Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Legalife-Ukraine emphasized the usefulness of the capacity building support provided by NSWP and the Global Fund to community-based organizations in Ukraine. This was important given the high expectations towards sex workers in funding application processes such as those of the Global Fund. She also highlighted the negative effects of persisting stigma and discrimination which in some cases led to fear among key population representatives to openly join Global Fund consultations in fora such as the CCM. In turn, during trainings conducted on the SWIT for CCM members in 14 sites in Ukraine, it became clear that many members were not aware of the SWIT guidance at all and were reluctant in adjusting ongoing programmes accordingly. During preparation of Global Fund applications, involved stakeholders saw the SWIT as too comprehensive and only agreed to consider certain chapters. Practical challenges in implementing programmes also related to the lack of adequate key population size estimates, hampering targeted outreach work for prevention, testing and treatment.

Evaluations of SWIT implementation in Ukraine revealed that while government, CCM and UN representatives saw sex workers as experts, community members themselves did not
feel meaningfully involved as documents were often complex and difficult to understand in a short time period.

In terms of funding sex worker-led programming, challenges were pointed out with regard to small proportions allocated to capacity building for sex workers as well as competition for funding. Additional challenges exist with regard to the legal environment in Ukraine, where the government has been trying to introduce the Swedish model.

In this compromised environment, practical solutions are needed in order to push the sex worker agenda forward.

**Key discussion points**

The following points were raised by participants:

- A stronger data focus is needed. Evidence and cost implications need to be presented to governments when introducing the SWIT, indicating required spending and clear returns on investment into sex worker programmes.
- Establishing partnerships between community networks such as NSWP and academia could improve the use of data by community members, contributing to community empowerment and building the evidence on the ground.
- To implement the SWIT as well as other key population implementation tools, capacity building among UN staff on key population programming based on the SWIT is required or needs to be revitalized after funding and subsequent training cuts. Funding proposals to the Global Fund should be screened for consistence in reflecting the different chapters of the SWIT.
- At the same time, UN agencies, particularly UNAIDS, UNFPA and WHO, should take up a leading role in training and promoting the use of the SWIT among government focal points, while sex worker communities need to take up a strong advocacy role wherever possible.
- While the SWIT itself does not make any reference to the role of National AIDS Councils (NAC) in promoting the tool, their structures and close working relations with the sex worker communities should be used more frequently to disseminate the SWIT and raise awareness across stakeholders on national and subnational levels.
- National implementation guidelines on community and key population programming should be taken into account and complemented by the global SWIT to offer harmonized programmes (localization of the SWIT), which reflect communities’ needs and priorities. While the SWIT itself was developed based on feedback from sex workers in 25 countries, it is a global guidance note that will not be fully adopted by every country, resulting in sex worker programmes that may be well performing in some areas and less well performing in others.
Defining priorities in HIV prevention and sex work for the next two years

Based on prior discussions on progress and challenges in the HIV response among sex workers, in particular related to strategic information, programming and legal and policy environments, participants in three different group works identified priority actions and responsibilities to be implemented by 2020.

Key strategic information issues and gaps

1. Develop guidance for the community (i.e. community description) on published guidance documents related to strategic information and monitoring and role of community in the tools (UNAIDS & NSWP)
2. Routine monitoring guidance for key populations (UNAIDS)
   - Resuscitate old unpublished guidance
   - Review for coverage of SWIT chapters
   - Map proposed indicators against MER indicators (LINKAGES) as well as Global Fund KPI requirements (GFATM)
3. Support systems for data collection
   - Survey partners about DHIS-2 for key population data (UNAIDS)
   - Community interface for DHIS-2 (UNAIDS & GFATM)
   - Integrate key populations indicators in situation room discussions
4. Social and structural indicators must be community led (UNAIDS & NSWP)
   - Important to monitor for human rights support, advocacy and impact
   - Several caveats on adverse impact of poorly collected and used data.
   - Develop community empowerment indicators (recommendation at 2014 SC meeting)
5. UN Joint Teams in country to train key populations on purpose of surveys, role of community and to capacitate for this role. (UN)
6. Finalize and release participatory size estimate guidance (UNAIDS & GFATM)
7. Improve data sharing at country level between donors and governments for a consolidated country response (UNAIDS country offices)
### Key programme challenges and priority strategic directions for scaling-up gaps

1. Tease out lead organization and strengthen delivery of SWIT-aligned minimum package for sex workers, while ensuring a people-centred approach (ensure health and welfare of the sex workers) (All)
2. Further empower sex worker communities to identify effective leaders, and mentor/support these leaders including psycho-social support (SW-led, NGOs)
3. Shift national and donor funding model for increased financial support of sex worker organizations (NAC, UN, donors)
4. Shift to Government–Community partnerships for governance of programs (All)
5. Strengthen meaningful involvement of sex workers in all aspects of programmes: advocacy, service delivery, evaluation (All)
6. Harmonize/minimize reporting tools, e.g. develop a balanced score card to assess quality of sex worker programs (NAC, NGOs, donors)
7. Further engage sex workers in developing rights-based, innovative interventions (SW-led, NGOs)
8. Further vertical integration (collaborative structures) of global, regional, local sex worker organizations (SW-led)

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### Key legal and policy issues and support to promote positive legal environments

1. Decriminalization (community involvement from the start)
   - UN and community consultations on law reform
   - UN to present evidence and arguments to governments on decriminalization
   - UN to bring together civil society and government to discuss decriminalization
   - Collection of evidence:
     - UN synthesizes evidence on harm of criminal laws and benefit of decriminalisation with community
     - UN supports community to collect evidence (training, financial support, validation)
   - Communities to advocate for law reform
   - UN to support community advocacy (at national and international level)
2. Guidance Note and SWIT
   - UN to raise awareness on guidance note and SWIT with HQ, regional and country offices
   - UN in cooperation with other partners to provide support to communities to train government, law enforcement and health service providers
   - Monitoring and evaluation of SWIT
     - UN to support communities to monitor
3. Review of ILO recommendation 200 on ‘AIDS in the world of work’ with regard to sex work as work
Key discussion points

The following points were raised by participants:

- The WHO guidance on intimate partner violence currently is not targeting sex workers but opportunities may be sought to link it to the sex worker agenda.

- In order to reach the last mile in the HIV response among sex workers, stakeholders involved should not only expect performance for delivery if adequate funding is not available. There should also be a common understanding on specific funding needs and gaps.

- An integrated research platform involving research organizations, community organizations, national programmes and others could promote a coordinated process on implementation science related to HIV and sex work that is currently lacking. Findings released by the platform could be presented to funding organizations with the purpose of accelerated resource mobilization for neglected areas in the response.

- A mechanism should be established to improve data sharing and reporting on emergencies related to programming on country level, including non-compliance of implementers or service delivery interruptions. The Global Prevention Coalition (GPC) Secretariat could be alerted to these issues to initiate necessary actions in collaboration with relevant partners. Furthermore, a human rights alert mechanism is available and coordinated by UNAIDS, to report human rights emergencies. At present few reports have been submitted by the sex worker community, but stronger engagement could be prioritized.

- A mapping should be conducted to monitor funding on country level, including funded interventions and different funding channels/different donors’ engagement.

- The checklist for UNAIDS country offices to support fast-tracking HIV among sex workers has been available since 2015 and may require updating of additional aspects and its implementation be monitored more frequently. UNAIDS Secretariat will review the checklist and share with consultation participants for further comments. Monitoring of checklist implementation could be integrated into the regular communication between the GPC Secretariat via email of three-monthly calls.
Wrap-up and follow-up

While participants agreed on the usefulness and timeliness of the meeting, they also highlighted the urgent need for rapid follow-up and implementation of identified action points, in order to not lose momentum. In this regard, community representatives called for closer communication and cooperation with UNAIDS and country coordinating mechanisms at country level, which should also include an update on the consultation’s main recommendations and action points. NSWP further committed to holding all participants accountable to their own commitments made and responsibilities.

The new contacts made, and networks created across stakeholders, countries and regions should be used for continued engagement and joint action for accelerating key population programming. In this context, more frequent meetings, that could be linked to other events (e.g. IAC) or fora for exchange were suggested, including virtual meetings via skype.

UNDP outlined the main concerns and aspects of discussion that could be taken up in future consultations:

- Improved data on male and transgender sex workers
- Funding limitations to promote social contracting
- Work on other SDGs beyond SDG3 related to sex work
- Potentials, threats and opportunities of virtual technologies in sex work programming
- Terminologies related to decriminalization

Tim Martineau of UNAIDS concluded by stressing the need for UNAIDS enhanced engagement with different key populations and committed to bringing together a group of staff at HQ to dedicate efforts to this issue. Furthermore, UNAIDS country office engagement with civil society organizations and communities on the ground needs to be strengthened in the next years. Through continued cooperation with the co-chairs and other members of the Steering Committee on HIV and sex work, a similar consultation meeting should be organized in the near future.