

## PRESS STATEMENT

### **UNAIDS welcomes Australia's commitment to equal treatment of people living with HIV in its immigration policies**

*HIV treated as other chronic conditions in immigration health assessment.*

**GENEVA, 10 July 2014**—UNAIDS welcomes confirmation from the Government of Australia that people living with HIV do not face an automatic exclusion, or unequal treatment when applying for entry, stay or residence visas. People living with HIV are treated similarly to other people with chronic health conditions and disabilities during the country's immigration health assessment process. Applications for visas from people living with HIV will be assessed against criteria applying to anyone with a chronic health condition.

The announcement came ahead of the 20th International AIDS Conference, which will take place in Melbourne, Australia, from 20 to 25 July 2014.

"People living with HIV need equal opportunity to contribute to and benefit from today's globalized world, where migration is increasingly important. Eliminating travel restrictions is not only a human right for individuals, it improves business prospects for communities," said the Executive Director of UNAIDS, Michel Sidibé.

UNAIDS advocates for the right to equal freedom of movement, regardless of HIV status. There is no evidence that restrictions on the entry, stay or residence of people living with HIV protect the public's health. In 2012, more than 40 chief executives from some of the world's largest companies signed a pledge opposing HIV restrictions, calling them discriminatory and bad for business.

As part of its ongoing dialogue with countries on this issue, UNAIDS has sent communications to all countries, territories and areas that appear to have HIV-related entry, stay and residence restrictions, and has raised the issue during official high-level visits. Australia has made important reforms to its migration health assessment requirements and procedures since the conclusion of a parliamentary inquiry on migration and disability in 2010, including an annual increase to the "significant cost threshold", the elimination of the cost assessment related to health services for humanitarian visa applicants and improvements to increase the transparency of the health assessment process. These reforms were assessed against the criteria outlined by the International Task Team on HIV-related Travel Restrictions, co-chaired by the Government of Norway and UNAIDS, and it was concluded that Australia had met the task team's standard.

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## **UNAIDS**

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) leads and inspires the world to achieve its shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. UNAIDS unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank—and works closely with global and national partners to maximize results for the AIDS response. Learn more at [unaids.org](http://unaids.org) and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.