



CAMEF CAMEROON



Yaoundé, December 1, 2013

## World AIDS Day

### News release

#### For Immediate Release

Let us eliminate the stigma and discrimination related to Articles 347 bis and 343 of the Penal Code that underpins Transsexual (Men or Women) as well as Gay and Bisexual transmission of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) and HIV / AIDS in Cameroon.

#### **By CAMFAIDS, Aids Acodex - Cameroon, ACODEVO and CAMEF**

As part of their joint initiative directed to those most vulnerable populations to the transmission of HIV / AIDS, CAMFAIDS, Aids Acodex - Cameroon, ACODEVO and CAMEF issue this World AIDS Day news release. Our slogan: Achieving Zero Stigma and Discrimination in health care centers for those most vulnerable to HIV / AIDS to more quickly, intelligently and effectively achieve the goals of UNAIDS.

This release is based on the objective of UNAIDS to achieve: "Zero new HIV infections, Zero discrimination and Zero AIDS-related deaths" beginning this World AIDS Day.

Although HIV prevalence in Cameroon declined from 5.1 to 4.3 %, it remains significant (EDS- MICS, 2011). We point out that for the more vulnerable populations, including MSM; the prevalence is estimated at 24% in the city of Douala and at 44 % in the Yaoundé (National Monitoring Report of the Policy Statement on HIV / AIDS of Cameroon 2012).

In view of the data, CAMFAIDS, Aids Acodev –Cameroon, ACODEVO and CAMEF work daily for health promotion and for the defense of human rights which are a part of the fight against HIV / AIDS. We resent and protest against Articles 347 bis and 343 of the Criminal Code which criminalizes homosexuality and are at the centre of several current cases of violation of human rights in Cameroon.

The Criminal Code makes it dangerous and difficult to prevent HIV / AIDS, which impacts everyone: All workers including sex workers, men and women, heterosexual, bisexual or homosexual.

In the case of homosexuals, our associations have observed violations in the application of procedures. Many defendants then undergo forced medical examinations while they were handcuffed .

CAMFAIDS, Aids Acodev – Cameroon, ACODEV and CAMEF and working every day for the promotion and defense of human rights and in the fight against HIV / AIDS. Violations of human rights and the use of HIV / AIDS prevention materials have become evidence of a crime! The new National Strategic Plan by the Ministry of Health calls for prevention work to be done with key populations (Workers, sex workers, truckers and homosexuals) targeting those most vulnerable to HIV / AIDS to reduce the spread of the disease. Prevention and sensitization activities are supposed to be implemented as prescribed by the Global Fund including prevention work with sex workers and homosexuals.

We encourage the Ministry of Health and UNAIDS to communicate with the Ministry of Justice to assist the associations fighting the spread of HIV / AIDS in the LGBT community.

The lack of evidence, the irregularities present in each procedure are all elements that should allow today the dismissal of all prosecutions and the release of all those accused of homosexuality in Cameroon.

The criminalization of homosexuality and of sex work in Cameroon is an aberration in terms of health promotion and HIV/AIDS prevention.

The National Strategic Plan on AIDS 2011-2015 clearly indicates that workers, sex workers and men who have sex with men are considered persons at high risk for HIV / AIDS transmission. The criminalization of homosexuality in Cameroon makes it difficult to prevent and care for them. Criminalization promotes an atmosphere conducive to risk-taking. It brings on not only increased risk of exposure to workers and sex workers, but also to their clients, to men who have sex with other men and to their families, particularly when their partners are women. Whether married or not in any country in Africa and elsewhere, a simple examination of reality indicates that some men, women, workers, sex workers and gays are at high risk to contract HIV / AIDS. The law can neither deny nor stay silent or do away with this reality. Beyond all controversy workers, sex workers and homosexuals in Cameroon only ask for one thing; the peaceful enjoyment of their citizenship without being troubled or harassed by the laws of a bygone era.

**END**

To read other press releases from CAMFAIDS, click on the links below:

[Open letter to Cameroon leader: Stop jailing LGBTs](#)

To read about the actions of CAMFAIDS, click on the links below:

[ILGA : CAMFAIDS for complete support of PLWHA](#)

**For more information contact:**

**CAMFAIDS** - Cameroonian Foundation For AIDS - is an association created in May 2010 by Cameroonian students and workers concerned and wanting to curb the rapid spread of HIV among the MSM community in the city of Yaoundé and its surroundings. The creation of the association occurred due to findings of the continuing spread of HIV among the population, especially those who live in the university area (city of Soa) and are members of a very sexually active community.

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**ACODEV AIDS** is a non -profit organization that provides support and guidance to idle and vulnerable populations, including workers, sex workers and transgender persons.

Recognized since 2009 by the prefecture of Wouri, Aids ACODEV Cameroon is under the authority of the Act No. 90/ 053.

**ACODEVO OCEAN** is an association created in 2012 by gays and sex workers in the city of Kribi with the primary objective of promoting human rights. It works hard to decrease the risk of infection by HIV / AIDS and for better health for all in the forthcoming future.

**CAMEF** - Cameroon Association for Empowerment Outreach Programs, CAMEF is a registered non -government organisation for the Defense of Human Rights. The agency advocates for socially disadvantaged community groups, without distinction for religion, race or sexual orientation (LGBT community and sex workers). The organization was established in 2010 to provide information and services to prevent HIV – AIDS. To those who have no access to information on HIV - AIDS and other related services.

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**Yaoundé, Cameroon**

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