



The Law Enforcement and HIV Network



Embargoed until 10.30 CET, Monday 6 October, 2014

Media Release

Amsterdam Declaration on Police Partnerships for Harm Reduction launched today by Pieter-Jaap Aalbersberg, Chief of Police (Amsterdam) and Aldo Lale-Demoz, Deputy Executive Director, UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Working with people affected by HIV and not arresting or prosecuting them a key to driving down HIV infection in many countries says Amsterdam Declaration

Police Chiefs and Superintendents from some 30 countries in Amsterdam to attend the 2nd International Conference on Law Enforcement and Public Health (LEPH2014) taking place October 6-8

Monday, 6 October, 2014 (Amsterdam, Netherlands)--The launch of the Amsterdam Declaration (1) today is a significant step forward in the recognition of the need to establish, develop and sustain partnerships between police forces and people living with, and affected by, HIV, and those providing care, treatment and support for them, law enforcement officials and health professionals said today.

"It is fitting that Amsterdam is home to this Declaration given its long time acceptance and successful implementation of harm reduction on the ground by the police force in the city itself," said Pieter-Jaap Aalbersberg, Chief of Police (Amsterdam). "Our experience and that of other police forces who have also embraced a harm reduction approach, tell us that working with people affected by HIV and not arresting or prosecuting them is a key to driving down HIV infection."

The Amsterdam Declaration is being launched ahead of the 2nd International Conference on Law Enforcement and Public Health (LEPH2014) taking place this week October 6-8 in Amsterdam. (2) Around 300 health professionals and officials, academics and NGOs will be joined by some 30 police chiefs and superintendents from 30 countries including The Netherlands, Indonesia, Ukraine, Ghana, Bangladesh, Kenya, USA, Australia and Tanzania.

Also attending today's launch in Amsterdam were **Aldo Lale-Demoz**, Deputy Executive Director, UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), **Jim Pugel**, Chief Deputy, King County Police, Washington State, USA, Chief Superintendent **Jones Blantari** of the Ghana Police and Lieutenant Colonel Lam Tien Dung of the People's Police Academy in Vietnam.

“The Amsterdam Declaration is significant because it is has been the brainchild of people from *all* sectors engaged in the global HIV response, said Nick Crofts, Senior Expert in Law Enforcement and Public Health at the International Development Law Organisation, Executive Director of the Law Enforcement and HIV Network and the Chair of this week’s conference. “The ultimate aim here is to facilitate HIV prevention, eliminate HIV-related stigma and discrimination and thus help turn around the epidemic in key affected populations.”

There is a growing recognition internationally that vital to an effective global HIV response is the establishment, development and sustainment of partnerships between police forces and people living with, and affected by, HIV, and those providing care, treatment and support for them.

A report (3) released by the Open Society Foundations earlier this year at the 20th International AIDS Conference in Melbourne, Australia demonstrated how in Burma, Ghana, India, Kenya, and Kyrgyzstan, police have partnered with community groups to promote access to health and social services. Such partnerships reduce the risk of HIV and drug overdose, and protect health and human rights.

The Amsterdam Declaration affirms that partnerships between law enforcement agencies and key affected populations should:

- be informed by a humanitarian and human rights-based approach, and a commitment to the principles of harm reduction;
- Enable and support access to HIV prevention, treatment and care services;
- Identify and eliminate policing practices that create barriers to the effective delivery of HIV services;
- Explore and promote alternatives to arrest and prosecution of those who are members of key affected populations;
- Provide and facilitate adequately resourced, high quality, sustainable and ongoing education and training relevant to the work of the partners in preventing HIV and eliminating stigma and discrimination;
- Develop standards for, and enable the auditing of, initiatives and projects to ensure that people living with HIV and key populations have access to the services and support they need;
- Gather evidence for, and contribute to, policy development and implementation at local, national, regional and international levels in the service of HIV prevention and the elimination of stigma and discrimination;
- Promote and ensure the meaningful participation of people living with HIV and key affected populations in line with best practice.

Notes to Editors:

1. <http://www.leahn.org/archives/3373>
2. <http://www.lephcon.com.au/>



The Law Enforcement and HIV Network



3. <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/reports/protect-and-serve>

Further Information:

(In Amsterdam)

Michael Kessler
In Toon-Media
Mob: +34 655 792 699
Email: michael.kessler@inton-media.com
Skype: mickgpi

Nick Crofts, Chair, 2nd International Conference on Law Enforcement and Public Health (LEPH2014)
Mob: +31 613 227 204
nick.crofts@unimelb.edu.au