Young People from Key Populations
In Asia and the Pacific Call:
“Do Not Leave Us Behind!”

ESCAP Member States have made bold commitments through ESCAP Resolutions 67/9 and 66/10 to establish comprehensive access to HIV services, to enhance financial sustainability so that the universal access targets can be achieved, and to build enabling environments free from HIV-related stigma, discrimination and exclusion. These intensified efforts in reaching the Three Zeros among key affected populations, namely sex workers, people who inject drugs, men who have sex with men, transgender people, mobile populations and migrants, intimate partners, and people living with HIV.

However, we, young people from key populations in Asia and the Pacific are concerned that we are being left behind in these efforts. Over 610,000 young people between the ages 15 to 24 are living with HIV in Asia and the Pacific, and new infections are on the rise among young people in many countries in the region. With 95% of these new infections believed to be among young people from key populations, there is no room for a business-as-usual approach. We continue to face double burden of stigma and discrimination based on our behaviors and our age. We face legal and policy barriers to services, including parental or spousal consent to HIV testing and services coupled with laws that criminalize same-sex behaviors, sex work, and drug use, and limited legal recognition that deter us from employment opportunities and other skills-building programs. Less than 50% of young key populations are able to access HIV services, including harm reduction and know their status. Inconceivably, access to treatment also remains low.

Meaningful partnership is enshrined in ESCAP resolution 67/9 and in UNESCAP 2012 Report Item 32; however, the absence of recognizing young key populations as strategic partners and the lack of mechanisms to ensure participation, accountability, transparency, as well as adequate and sustainable financing to support community systems of young key populations make it difficult for us to engage in national strategic planning, including Global Fund processes.

We must be central in the HIV response, and meaningfully engaged in planning and decision-making, implementation and management, and monitoring and evaluation. We need investments in integrated sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and HIV services that are youth-friendly, scaled up access to high quality comprehensive sexuality education as committed to by Member States in the 2013 Asian and Pacific Declaration on Population and Development, and legal and policy environments that recognize our right to health.

We, young key populations in Asia and the Pacific, call on governments at the Intergovernmental Meeting on HIV and AIDS to recognize these priority issues and demand actions be taken to address them. We call for the following:
Youth-friendly HIV and sexual and reproductive health services

- Invest in engaging young key populations in the development of guidelines and indicators for a wide-range of high quality youth-friendly HIV and sexual and reproductive health services including harm reduction that tailored to our needs, rights, and desires, especially with those living with and affected by HIV and young women, girls and all other young key populations in accessing legal and safe abortion services.
- Invest in collecting age disaggregated data on young key populations that would contribute to scale up providing specialized services and influence national and regional policies for YKP’s in the region.
- Commit to allocating dedicated budgets for youth-friendly health and social protection services including community-led facilities to strengthen health systems that address our prevention, testing, treatment, and care and support needs, including holistic services for adolescents and young people living with HIV that support a healthy transition to adulthood
- Ensure safe spaces that protect us from stigma and discrimination, where we can freely express concerns, and where providers demonstrate understanding and knowledge about, and commitment to, our SRH rights

Comprehensive Sexuality Education

- Recognize comprehensive sexuality education as a critical component of the AIDS response, as agreed by Member States in the 2013 Asia and Pacific Declaration on Population and Development by adopting a gender-inclusive comprehensive sexuality education curriculum to include information on sexual orientation and gender identity and sexual and reproductive health and rights for young people in and out of schools
- Support the training of teachers, education providers and community leaders so they are comfortable and confident in delivering comprehensive sexuality education, and in engaging with parents about its benefits.
- Mobilize schools, civil societies, communities, and young key populations to undertake the delivery of comprehensive sexuality education and to ensure linkage to social support and health services with the fully support from government, donors and multiple stakeholders
- Ensure access to sexuality education that meets the needs of adolescents living with HIV and work to address the anxiety, fear and complex emotions some adolescents living with HIV face around sexuality and their reproductive options through counseling, peer support and role model programs.
- Use the medias and dissemination systems to conduct the campaigns for HIV/AIDS education, sexual and reproductive health and rights and comprehensive sexuality education, with the accurate, universal, and non-judgmental information regarding HIV/AIDS and young key affected populations could be delivered to the public.
Meaningful Engagement of and Investment in Young Key Populations

- Create mechanisms in national processes, including the Global Fund and other mechanisms to ensure that young key populations are engaged as critical partners and their needs and issues are reflected in domestic and other investments
- Expand the evidence, strategic information, and disaggregated data on young people from key populations for programming, including that collected by young key population organizations and their advocates
- Provide education and employment opportunities, and increase the investment in the education, health and wellbeing of young key populations, to develop programmes that provide opportunities for YKAP.
- Build a consistent dialogue mechanism between youth-led organizations and multiple stakeholders to ensure success of empowering young people in decision-making, programming, and service delivery and monitoring and evaluation

Legal and Policy Environment

- Support sexual and reproductive rights of young people from key populations by eliminating laws that criminalize same-sex relations and other forms of sexuality and gender expressions, sex work, and drug use;
- Remove legal barriers that violate the right to education, decent work, and healthcare accessibility including health insurance coverage for young people living with HIV, young migrants and other key affected populations
- Ensure the removal of policies and laws that restrict access of young key populations to HIV and SRH services, including parental consent and marital consent laws, and age restrictions to harm reduction.