

The Promotion and Protection of the Right to Health of People Living with HIV: the Engagement of Faith-Inspired Organizations

Oral Statement under Item 3 - General Debate, proposed for the 20th Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council by Caritas Internationalis (International Confederation of Catholic Charities) and [...]

Thank you Madame President/Mr. or Ms. Vice-President!

Caritas Internationalis joins with other # NGOs in bringing to the attention of this august Council, and its Special Procedures, the active engagement of Faith-Inspired Organizations in promoting and defending the Right to Health for all. Such organizations can and do serve as key stakeholders in this regard, since their engagement is based upon an approach that respects and is rooted in the dignity of every human being.

Failure to recognize the role of Faith-Inspired Organizations in the promotion and protection of the Right to Health, in particular for people living with HIV, including children living with HIV or HIV/TB co-infection, can result in concomitant neglect of the basic survival and quality of life needs of adults and children living with or affected by HIV or HIV/TB co-infection.

Faith-Inspired Organizations are present in local communities literally everywhere people live their lives, and are deeply rooted in the communities they serve. They are significant partners in delivery of care, treatment and support in the most rural areas and poorest neighbourhoods of the world, and many religious communities are also havens of refuge for people living with or affected by HIV and AIDS.

Such organisations are based in - or have enjoyed a - long-term presence in most countries where they work, are engaged in comprehensive care and support, and have demonstrated their excellent potential to mobilize communities to respond to the HIV and AIDS crisis.

However, despite the excellent and documented record in the field of HIV service delivery and primary health care, Faith-Inspired Organizations do not receive equitable attention or share of the resources designated to support global, national and local health initiatives.

Therefore, the co-signatories strongly recommend this Council and its Special Procedures, in conjunction with discussions on decisions aimed at promoting and protecting the Right to Health for all, in particular for people living with HIV, including children living with HIV or HIV/TB co-infection, to engage more actively with Faith-Inspired Organizations as key stakeholders in advocating for universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support for people living with or affected with HIV and related infections.

Thank you!