

**A Call to Action: Global Sex Workers Recommend Policy
Change for Better HIV Prevention and Treatment
Kaiser Family Foundation
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SIENNA BASKIN: My name is Sienna Baskin and I am from the Sex Workers Project at the Urban Justice Center in New York City. I'm here to welcome you to a symposium on the way sex workers rights, health and lives are affected by laws and policies around the world.

In 2011 the U.N. Global Commission on HIV and the Law held regional dialogues around the world; sex workers participated in every dialogue sharing how laws affected their access to HIV prevention and treatment, testimony about human rights abuses and practical recommendations for change.

We thought that the International AIDS Conference needed to hear these same messages. Unfortunately even as we celebrate the lifting of the HIV ban, U.S. Immigration Laws exclude most sex workers from even attending this conference. In spite of this barrier we bring you leaders and luminaries from the Global Sex Workers Rights Movement here in the room and live streamed from the Sex Worker Freedom Festival in Calcutta, India.

We also invite you to read the full submission and the final report of the Global Commission which endorses many of our recommendations, and we will have half an hour or possibly a little more at the end for questions.

So our first speakers; from the Africa Region we have

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Kholi Buthelezi from South Africa. She's the National Coordinator of Sisonke and the Country Coordinator for the African Sex Workers Alliance. She trains sex workers in how to achieve health, human rights and better working conditions.

We also have Sian Maseko from Zimbabwe, she's the Director of the Sexual Center, she works with the LGBTI community and sex workers towards sexual rights in Zimbabwe and they will be presenting together right here.

SIAN MASEKO: Thank you Sienna. Can you hear? Oh yes okay, thank you. We're going to kick off today starting to talk about one of the biggest challenges facing sex workers in Africa and this undoubtedly criminalization and criminal laws. Sex workers are targeted by national laws, by-laws and often national and local policies as well. Sex workers have greater exposure to HIV because of criminalization, it's impossible to affirm the human rights of sex workers if criminal sanctions exist. The criminalization of various aspects of the sex work industry effectively criminalizes sex workers as individuals.

And I'm now going to hand over to Kholi to illustrate examples from the continent about how criminalization results in serious and extensive human rights violations for sex workers.

KHOLI BUTHELEZI: Thank you, hi everyone. I'm glad to given this opportunity. Criminalization of sex work it has

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violated the sex workers rights, sex workers are being arrested unlawfully. Examples, the profiling of sex workers in Cape Town in the Eastern Cape and in some of the countries, bad conditions when sex workers are being arrested, toilets are dirty, contracting illness because of the dirty cells. Pepper spraying in the vagina, private parts, that also can cause cancer, pepper spraying generally is not good.

Sexual assaults and rapes, for example one case of a sex worker in Durbin, she was raped by police and when she the policeman to use a condom, the policeman's response was what do you know about condoms? Humiliation of dignity, a sex worker was gang raped by four policeman in [inaudible] and she was afraid of laying charge because the police are saying who will believe you if you lay charge against me?

Also police invade the sex workers privacy by going to their houses asking for bribes and going to their houses to destroy sex workers ARV's, that also causes defaulting off medication for sex workers. For example in [inaudible], police would go into brothels where sex workers worked and then they will arrest the sex workers that are working indoors and they call it loitering.

One of the examples of Mpumalanga, the police went to where sex workers stay because they know where they live and then when they get there they destroy condoms, they stabbed

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condoms, they also force the sex workers to eat condoms that have been used. They also force sex workers to jump over the bridge so that it would look like they've committed suicide. In Limpopo police are also asking for bribes from sex workers, for example they will handcuff sex workers and drive in front of them using the [inaudible], discriminating and exploiting them to the community by saying that they are sex workers. And then they would go house to house asking for money from the neighbors to give bribes to the police.

Another police abuse of sex workers violating human rights is the medical care of sex workers and they don't have access to medical ARV's if they've been arrested. Demanding to do testing, sex workers are forced to do testing that they arrested, for example in Malawi and Zimbabwe. And sex workers have been asked to affidavit to prove that they are from that area if they want to access health agencies.

The outreach -- for example, in the organization that I come from, SUEd the Sex Worker Education Task Force, we conduct outreach and some of the provinces are conducting outreach and police have been following them and asking them -- saying to them they are promoting sex work if they are delivering services to sex workers, which is a violation of the Human Rights of sex workers, for them to access health advocacies.

Confiscation of condoms by police is a Human Rights

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health violation, for example, it happens to Kenya, it happens to Namibia, it happens in the U.S., it happens in South Africa as well. Some of the cases that occurred during the outreach - we worked with the Women's Legal Central, that is our partner the attorney who also works with the [inaudible], we do report those cases to them and they are the ones that are helping us to document in terms of Human Rights violations of sex workers. Thank you [applause].

SIAM MASEKO: Thanks Kholi. We just sort of wanted to highlight some other issues that we think are quite specific to Africa. As Kholi has illustrated, the criminal law is often impossible to enforce and therefore the police often act outside the law and as a result put an enormous pressure sex workers. It's often a serious abuse of police power and often an accompanying impunity. Police very rarely receive complaints from sex workers, sex workers often have no recourse to justice at all.

Criminal laws are often used as a justification for stigma and discrimination and against sex workers from various service providers, institutions and in general, the wider community. The sexual abuse of sex workers by the police increases the risk of HIV and the criminalization of sex workers makes it impossible to challenge those abuses through the conventional complaints system.

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I think it's also important to note this issue of multiple discriminations against sex workers. Female sex workers are discriminated against on the basis of being women as well as being sex workers workers, but it's also important to note issues around the sodomy laws for example that often violate the rights of male sex workers. Tran-sex workers often experience humiliation and ridicule at the hands of healthcare services providers. So there are additional factors that violate and infringe the rights of sex workers.

And I think it's important for us to understand that the experience of sex workers reveal the deeply entrenched, narrow understanding of healthcare provisions in many Africa countries. The heteronormative normative model and the morality discourse that dominates healthcare has a huge and detrimental impact on sex workers. And we need to look beyond the meaning of health as merely physical and instead be guided by sex workers to appreciation of well-being and personal safety and security.

So what are the wider issues that we raise at the Global Commission? One of them is definitely the fact that sex workers have no visibility and recognition. They have no political voice, they have limited participation and therefore a limited realization of their full rights and entitlements as citizens. The treatment of sex workers, the exclusion of sex

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workers from national policies repressive and discriminate repunative laws, prevent sex workers from affirming their fundamental rights accorded to them as citizens in the constitution of many African countries.

Issues around freedom of association; it's often very difficult for sex worker lead organizations to register, even organizations working with sex workers from a rights-based approach, it's often very difficult for them to register and work in countries. Issues of the right to self-determination; it's very difficult for sex workers often to get identity documents.

The right to organize both individually and collectively coupled with the denial of the right to register organizations prevents sex workers from accessing funds and also prevents sex workers from recognition at higher level platforms where their voice needs to be heard.

I also just wanted to mention an issue of research which is very problematic. There is a lack of data of the proportion of sex workers living positively. Only six countries of 24 in Eastern and Southern African region reported HIV rates among sex workers to U.N. Aides in 2010. The criminalization significantly exposes sex workers to unethical and exploitive research and this is a huge problem that needs to be addressed. And the criminal law makes it very difficult

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for sex workers to ensure that research is conducted ethically.

The issue of freedom of expression has come out very strongly with regard to sex workers advancing their rights and there have been numerous examples on the continent in Africa about sex workers being denied the right to march, denied the right to protest. In South Africa when sex workers have marched and demonstrated they have often been arrested and this is becoming a serious issue in terms of freedom of expression and protest, the right to thought and conscience.

No participation or leadership at national level for sex workers to input or to lead around issues to do with HIV services and how sex workers need and want those services to be delivered.

So just to wrap up, what were our recommendations? So obviously decriminalization was one of our key recommendations, making it easier for sex workers to complain about police and health professional's abuse and then that would give them power in the relationship. Decriminalization, we really feel it's about ensuring the sex workers have power to make decisions about their bodies and have power to access services in the way that they need those services.

Free and accessible legal help for sex workers, sex workers need recourse to justice, it's absolutely crucial in advancing sex workers' rights. Political accountability,

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holding politicians to account for the failure to reform laws in line with HIV policies and their failure to reconcile the disconnect between laws and policies around HIV. And finally, the opportunity to do grass-roots research, to actually ensure that sex workers are able to have for themselves what sex workers want. Thank you [applause]..

Sian Maseko

SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you, and again we can really only give you a taste of the breadth of information and recommendations that we were able to put together for this Global Commission in two hours. So we now turn to a very different region and yet you will hear a lot of the same concerns echoed; the high-income countries region which included Western Europe and the U.S.

Our first speaker is Pye Jacobson from Sweden, she's founder of the Rose Alliance an Association of Sex Workers in Sweden. She's also Project Manager with HIV Sweden, and she'll speak from here.

PYE JACOBSON: I don't really have any Power Points, we were just going to put a pretty slide up there. When the report from the Commission on HIV and the Law came out, two models or two countries were highlighted as very problematic, one was the United States and PEPFAR and the other one was the Swedish Model. And this is the model that Sweden is claiming is a huge success, that sex work is gone, we have no

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trafficking, et cetera, but I'm going to tell that sex work is all the same. We still have clients, we are still working and we're doing fine when it comes to sex work.

For those of you who don't know what the Swedish Model is it's when you criminalize the clients and the sex workers can actually sell sex and that's tolerated. And this might sound good but at the heart of the Swedish Model is the idea that sex work is men's violence against women and that sex workers are always victims. So the state has actually made a law that tells everybody we are victims and this makes - something happens in society where you do this. I also have to say that we only talk about women who sell sex, we don't talk about male sex workers or tran-sex workers, even of course we do have them in Sweden.

Now we had this law for 13 years and this message that all sex workers are victims has been filtered through the system so every service provider, every healthcare provider, every politician, every local counsel person knows this now, it's even taught in school. And what happens is that when sex workers ask for services they will be rescued, if they don't want to be rescued they will be denied services. And they will be accused of suffering from a false consciousness, romanticizing prostitution and the most favorite one that I use today is they don't realize that sex work is a form of self-

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harm, thus labeling people more or less mentally ill.

And what happens with stigma and discrimination? I don't think I have to tell you, it's at an all-time high. And of course this also affects the attitude against HIV prevention, we had our lovely National Coordinator Against Trafficking and Prostitution saying maybe they can buy their own condoms if they make so much money. He also said - no actually, that was a social worker with a prostitution unit in Stockholm that said why give them rape alarms, they just often get raped anyway? And when it comes to migrants we still stop them at the border for carrying too many condoms and that's why we don't let them in.

When the Commission's report came out it was actually in the news in Sweden and it said certain countries have been highly criticized and I think they mentioned two African countries, there was not a word about Sweden being criticized. While Sweden is still only doing HIV prevention for sex workers in one city in the south of Sweden. We only have needle exchange in two cities in the south of Sweden, not in Stockholm mind you and we have a disproportionately - God, that's hard, high number of people in jail per capita for HIV related crime. I think we have the highest number in the world, and to insult to injury they are trying to spread this model to other countries.

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And to end this I want to quote a dear friend of mine, the late Robert Carr and say you know this bullshit and it's time we call it bullshit and we have to stand for it, that we don't tolerate this anymore. Thank you [applause].

SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you Pye. One theme that really did emerge in the high-income countries dialogue was that there are policies that affect sex workers within these countries, there are also policies of these countries that affect sex workers around the world because these countries have so much power. And on that them we have Melissa Ditmore, an Independent Consultant on sex work and HIV, she's written numerous books and reports on sex workers and HIV in the U.S., Asia and Africa.

MELISSA DITMORE: Thank you Sienna, I'm pleased to be here. As most of you know PEPFAR is foreign assistance from the U.S. Government for HIV and AIDS programming and PEPFAR currently operates in more than 150 countries. PEPFAR has facilitated the provision of ARV treatment to thousands of individuals and expanded services for many including sex workers in some places. However, this funding is conditional, recipients of PEPFAR funds are required to sign contracts that include a clause specifying that the recipient is quote opposed to prostitution and sex trafficking because of the psychological and physical risks they pose for women, men and

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children.

This condition for funding is colloquially known as the Anti-prostitution Pledge, this contract language is an adaptation. Earlier versions included in the laws creating PEPFAR and its reauthorization in 2008 were different but the effects were not. Despite the fact that sex workers face disproportionate risk for HIV and despite the current U.S. Administration's efforts to base policy upon evidence, we found in our research that the pledge is not grounded in evidence, or is grounded in very partisan interpretation of evidence.

What we found across our research is that by inadvertently promoting stigma against sex workers in health programs, the Pledge in all its forms increases sex workers vulnerability to HIV infection by undermining the ability of sex workers to access HIV treatment, care and support. In spite of its intent, the pledge appears to encourage violations of sex workers' rights around the world especially in health and social care settings and in programs designed to assist sex workers interested in transitioning to other occupations.

Stigmatization and discrimination are social drivers of the HIV pandemic and to promote such, even inadvertently is counter to United Nations recommendations in HIV and AIDS programming. These real life examples illustrate adverse effects of the pledge. Some projects for sex workers have

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closed, sex workers have been excluded from services and denied information about HIV and its transmission in some settings in Asia. Organizations in Africa that propose to rehabilitate sex workers further stigmatize sex workers who supplement their incomes after rehabilitation with sex work. This stigmatization encourages people to hide their involvement in sex work.

This takes the form of not carrying safe sex commodities including condoms and that in turn, severely inhibits their ability to practice safe sex in sexual transactions. Sex worker organizations have been dropped from NGO networks in which they had previously participated. Faith-based organizations with PEPFAR funding have sponsored condom burnings in Uganda decreasing access to safe sex commodities while promoting stigma against sex workers and others. Sex workers have reported higher levels of stigmatization in research settings after the implementation of the pledge.

In addition to the Human Rights violations we document here, anecdotal reports of similar practices in other areas were also found. These examples demonstrate how the Pledge directly undermines publicly funded safer sex promotion and HIV prevention efforts supported by PEPFAR. One form this undermining takes is the suppression of information about what works for HIV prevention and AIDS programming with sex workers.

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Because organizations are insecure in their funding, reports of effective sex work projects and research with sex workers have been censored by organizations that fear investigation by U.S. congressional representatives, or they fear losing their funding.

In one example, after publication of USAID funded study about violence against sex workers in Cambodia, the U.S. based funding recipient was investigated by congressional staff at the behest of the elected representative who proposed the inclusion of the pledge in PEPFAR. This investigation was perceived to be vindictive, no violations were found despite the months of investigation. In light of the disproportionate effects of HIV among sex workers and the urgent need to scale up programming, the PEPFAR Anti-prostitution Pledge risks the lives and health and threatens the lives of thousands.

The fear of being branded as pro-prostitution has inhibited dialogue and information sharing about HIV and AIDS programming for sex workers to such an extent that many organizations no longer promote their successes. This has contributed to a lacuna in the literature about HIV programming with sex workers. Stigmatization and marginalization increased the risk of contracting or transmitting HIV. For this reason U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has spoken out against stigmatization of key populations in the fight against HIV and

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AIDS saying overt and covert stigmatization and discrimination against these groups is a significant factor impeding data collection and targeted funding and programming.

Sex workers are one of the key populations referred to in this statement. Indeed sex workers experience stigma and discrimination in many settings, the elimination of the Anti-prostitution Pledge from U.S. funding contracts would be a forward step against the stigmatization of sex workers in U.S. funded healthcare settings. Short of eliminating the Pledge, clarification about what is permitted is necessary. Inconsistent interpretation has exacerbated the problems caused by the Pledge.

Communicating changes and explicit rules clearly and succinctly might eliminate, or at the very least reduce multiple interpretations of the Pledge and the HIV related and other harms experienced by sex workers and those providing care and support to them. Thank you [applause].

SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you so much. And our last speaker from the high-income countries region will maybe challenge that moniker of High Income Countries somewhat. We have Deon Haywood of New Orleans here in the United States, she's the Executive Director of Women With a Vision which was founded to improve the lives of marginalized women including transgender women, their families and communities by addressing

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the social conditions that harm their health and well-being.
Deon will speak from there.

DEON HAYWOOD: Good morning everyone. What I would like to do is show you how in High Income Countries like the U.S. and a state that I'm from, the state of Louisiana living in the city of New Orleans, how laws that were enacted over 200 years ago has now criminalized women and trans-women involved in sex work.

So in 1805 Louisiana's first code that was issued, it was designed to keep - Crime Against Nature was designed to keep people - gay men from having sex in the French Quarter in 1805. As the years progressed in 1942, it become synonymous with sodomy and the Moral Code began in the state of Louisiana and throughout the south of what was considered a crime against nature.

In 1982 the Louisiana legislator added the solicitation provision at the request of New Orleans's Police Department in response to a growing problem in male prostitution. In the statute - which is considered in the state of Louisiana Statute 1489, Crime Against Nature, is the solicitation by human being of another with an intent to engage in any unnatural porno copulation for compensation. To break that down, simply oral or anal sex is criminalized in the state of Louisiana.

What happened after that is once the law was changed in

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1982 to so-called target male prostitution and it really wasn't around prostitution, it was just any gay male that could be targeted and arrested and criminalized for who they were.

Giving police that amount of power - they had the power, they either charged you with prostitution, which in the state of Louisiana is misdemeanor and carries just fine, or Solicitation Crime Against Nature which required registration on the Federal Sex Offender Registry in the U.S.

And what that did was allow the power of people in a system that in Louisiana and particularly in the city of New Orleans, the Criminal Justice System receives a per diem per person for every person that they have in prison - in jail, in the local jail. So when police are out arresting people they then started targeting transgender women and poor women, largely African-American women who are involved in sex work normally for drug addiction, homelessness or survival.

And so this was so harshly used - by our last stats we had 48-percent of the people on the Sex Offender Registry were African-American women. They were the easiest to be targeted, easy to be arrested and also many of these women experienced a lot of violence by police officers, many of them were raped. Last year we had three police officers who were actually convicted of rape of women involved in sex work in New Orleans.

Not only did they have to pay fines and fines can go

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anywhere from \$60 a year but once women would leave prison, they have to pay \$500 to register themselves on the registry. If they do not pay that \$500 within 21 days then you automatically are returned to prison.

If any of you can imagine what it's like to - how often, think about this conference and having to be scanned in everywhere we go or how often we have to show our I.D., imagine what it's like to be a young woman or a young trans-person or a gay male that has been charged with a crime against nature, the word sex offender goes across your I.D. So everywhere you go and you have to show your I.D. it says sex offender which means you can't really find what people like to call a normal job and you're criticized, you can't get housing and it makes it really difficult to navigate, when you think about the U.S. and the way we show our I.D's for everything here.

So this hinders also services because most of the time when you go places in the U.S. sex offenders - people on the Sex Offender Registry are not allowed certain provisions, you can't get money for school, you can't live close to a school. And for women who are mothers and have children, you can't take your kids to something as simple as trick-or-treat during Halloween or bring your kids to school, so this law has affected many people throughout Louisiana largely.

But the good news is we had the law equalized in June

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of 2011, we had the law equalized in the state of Louisiana to equal prostitution so people no longer have to register as a sex offender. This year, June of 2012, the Louisiana Supreme Court declared that charging people with a crime against nature and having them register as a sex offender violated the 14th Amendment of the Constitution [applause].

I would love to be able sit here and say that Women With a Vision did that all on our own but we did not, we did it with some of the people sitting on this podium, many people across the country and amazing lawyers. But really what changed this law was the women and the trans-women and the people mostly affected, it was very important for us that they would be the voice of this campaign which they labeled No Justice. And we decided that their stories had to be at the forefront, that we can have amazing lawyers, that I can come and speak at events like this. But it would be this amazing feat, a historical feat that in the U.S. South where normally we know how racism is in the country, but how it exists in the south that majority African-American women and trans-women would have an opportunity to lead and change history of a law that was adapted over 200 years ago.

And so we did that and that was successful but we're still waiting, it's kind of like half of a win. We have in the state of Louisiana right now just in Orleans Parish where Women

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With a Vision is located, we have over 500 women remain on the Sex offender Registry and the state has yet to removed them even though the Supreme Court has ruled that this violates. So we're still fighting and hopefully soon they'll be off. Thank you [applause].

SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you so much Deon. We now have our speaker from Calcutta, so we're hoping that our live transmission will work and we will joined by one of the members of the Sex Workers Freedom Festival. Mariana Bihar is from SWAN, the Sex Workers Rights Advocacy Network which is a network of civil society organizations advocating for the Human Right of sex workers in Central and Eastern Europe and she's representing the dialogue that happened in Eastern Europe. So we're going to make this work hopefully.

Thank you for your patience, we halfway there, we have video but no audio but we're working on it and we want to see if we can have this happen just slightly later in the symposium. So with that I'm going to introduce our next speaker here in the room which is Elena Reynaga of Argentina [applause]. She is the Executive Secretary of RedTraSex the Latin and Caribbean network of female sex workers which is made up of 15 countries in the region. She's also the founder of AMMAR which is a network of sex workers in Argentina. We also have Artemis Lopez from HIPS, a local organization for sex

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workers who will be translating for us.

ELENA REYNAGA: Hello everyone. I was thinking a lot during the presentations of all the women behind me, I like this - or in front of me, rather. And we agree in the fact that the problems are basically the same in Asia and in Europe and in Africa and in Argentina which are the police. She feels that it would kind of redundant to talk about all of the problems, like all of the police abuse that the women in Latin America suffer.

Since she is more of a dreamer and more of an active person she would like to talk about how we can change this given that we have already established. She believes that nothing is impossible. Through fighting, compromise and empowerment sex workers can achieve rights that are important to all of us.

Well there are some reports of the things that sex workers go through, there isn't an actual data on all of the crimes, all of the just unreported crimes that sex workers have to face like violations and rapes and just all this violence that happens that isn't fully documented. We should be looking for resources to achieve this all over the world not just Argentina or not just in Latin America. And everybody should get untied, this includes both workers and professionals in other fields because professionals have some sort of knowledge

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about how we can deal with this and sex workers have first-hand knowledge of all the abuses that they're going through.

Latin American women tend to be underestimated because they can't read or they can't speak English so people assume that they can't actually do their own projects. This 59 year old woman who is standing right in front of you and was actually a sex worker learned to read when she 47, she founded AMMAR. She founded the organization of sex workers in Argentina and she actually lead it for three years without knowing how to read, just having come out of primary [applause] and this just shows all of the power that all of these silly little women who can't read or write have.

And she is tired of people speaking for her, these are the women who should be talking, these are the people who should be talking [applause] and we should be helping them along and we shouldn't be talking for them. The problem in Latin America are all these laws with traffic because although sex workers have been gaining a lot of rights, they keep coming up with all of these laws on sex traffic and everything is traffic. And interestingly enough it's the U.S. that's funding all of these groups that are getting all of those laws passed.

She doesn't know how long she has so she's just going to finish up. She's just going to invite all of her comrades here, all of the people in Africa and all of you here listening

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to us to unite ourselves and to just work to give us access to all of the resources and information and things that we need so that all of these things go to grass-root organizations instead of people who are going to speak for us.

Just as an example a couple of years back the Dominican Republic wanted to criminalize having HIV because they said transmission of it was always intentional. So all of these people got together; the Latin American Civil Society got together and they started collecting signatures and they just got together and actually stopped that law from happening. So that just proves that unity is power. Thank you very much [applause].

SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you Elena and thank you Artemis for jumping in and helping us. We're going to go forward with our last speaker from D.C., we're still working on and hoping that we can introduce our speaker from Eastern Europe who is in Calcutta. But our last speaker we are very honored to have, Miriam Edwards of Guiana. She is the Chair of the Caribbean Sex Work Coalition which seeks to advance for the rights of sex workers while building the capacity of its members. And we're also honored to have her - she's also the Co-Chair of The Global Village and she's going to speak from there [applause].

MIRIAM EDWARDS: Good morning everyone. I would like to speak on the laws and policies that need to be reformed in

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Caribbean. It's a battle for a sex worker it's hell. The Caribbean is a fun-loving destination, at its best combined and laid-back atmosphere of the islands with sizzling passion of Latin culture from Aruba to Puerto Rico to Cancun. You'll find nightclubs pumping out hot dance music like salsa and SoCo until the sun comes up.

Unfortunately the Caribbean is also known to have the worst laws and policies that fuels discrimination against marginalized population especially sex workers. For the purpose of this presentation I will seek to first give you a comprehensive understanding of the laws and policies of the English, Dutch and French-speaking Caribbean as it relates to sex work. Before I give you that presentation, let me just say who are sex workers? Sex workers are adult women, men and transgender people and are all forms of gender identity in between. There are many different types of sex workers as they are different types of people.

What they have in common in their choice to make sex work their profession, sex workers choose their professions for many different reasons. Some choose it because it allows them to work flexible hours or because they aren't a higher income, others do sex work because it rarely requires credentials or license, many enjoy the sense of belonging. In other words, people chose to be sex workers for many of the same reasons

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other people choose other professions; because they need to make a living to support themselves, their family, because they are good at it. Sex workers are sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, husbands and wives but unlike most people sex workers face discrimination because they choose their profession. This results in exclusion from many facts of every day mainstream lives.

The laws and policies in the Caribbean vary when it relates to sex work; this variance is seen in different territories whether it is English, Dutch or French-speaking. In general, the laws in prostitution in Dutch Caribbean and Haiti are least restrictive; they criminalize the torrid party, facilitation of prostitution such as brothel, keeping procuring of trafficking but not the prostitute or [inaudible] organization of prostitution.

In the Netherlands we clearly see examples of the local government legalizing prostitution in specific, defined ways, laws that govern the French Department in the Caribbean and English speaking Caribbean countries are most extensive. Every activity of a prostitute are criminal acts thus, while being a sex workers it considered a crime. It is also impossible to practice sex work under the current laws.

The laws that pertain to sex work are interpreted and reinforced to specific culture and religions, ideologies, many

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of which condemn women participating in sex work. The laws that relate to prostitution or both on the [inaudible] and reinforce then place sex workers across the Caribbean Region in a very vulnerable position. Women and girls involved in sex work tend to be most vulnerable as they remain a bias within the law and ideologies that identify women and not men as prostitutes are those that must surround in men sex work, are also actually felt by men.

I am not sure how many of you know the Movie *How Stella Got Her Groove Back* but this movie focused some attention on the male sex workers in Jamaica, the Beach Boys as they are commonly called usually have clients from all over the world. And I will say a little on this, a lot of times persons who sit in the ivory tower making decision for sex workers and making so-called stigmatization decisions for sex workers leave their ivory tower to go on vacation in the Caribbean islands and sleep with the Beach Boys [applause], the Rent-A-Dread and these persons and they don't see themselves as sex workers but they are clients of sex workers.

And then they stigmatize against open sex workers but they are sitting in the ivory tower and they are sex workers too. So we want them to get this message; that we need decriminalization and legalization of sex work. If they are free to do it, sex workers must be free to live their lives too

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[applause].

It is very evident that laws in the Caribbean as it is related to sex work need to be reinforced. It is widely known that the Caribbean has the second highest HIV rate in the world and if we in the Caribbean continue to have laws that target, discriminate and penalize sex workers there will be no change, we will not get to zero new infections by 2015.

Change in these laws are sorely needed, the HIV prevalence amongst adults in the Caribbean is about 1.0-percent, that is higher than in all other regions outside of Sub-Saharan Africa. Eighteen thousand new infections took place in 2009, which averages 15 new infections every day. There are 12,000 AIDS related death in 2009 or 33 persons per day.

The health of sex workers is seriously jeopardized by these incriminating laws that prevent them from accessing health services or collecting condoms or receive sexual and reproduction health services or many other medical acts. By not getting access to condoms the health of sex workers is compromised. Some sex workers are arrested and charged if found with more than two or three condoms on them. How do we protect the health of our sex workers? I believe it is time that we promote 100-percent condom use. By not being allowed to carry condoms, sex workers' ability to negotiate safe sex

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with clients is seriously undermined. A lot of stigmatization sessions need to be carried out with members of the public.

Further, law outside the Caribbean for the contribution to lack of adequate health services for sex workers, the so-called Anti-prostitution Pledge adopted by the United States Government has worsened the lack of funding available to sex workers organizations. NGO's across the world have adopted an organization-wide policy opposing prostitution in order to be eligible for federal anti-AIDS or anti-trafficking funding.

As it is now less than 1-percent of the global funding is geared toward sex workers, the chilling affect of this policy reaches beyond sex workers organizations or allies, collaborators and funders in all the Human Right Movements, many of whom fear losing their own U.S. Government Funding.

The act to the negative impact of the U.S. Government Funding Policies on Sex Worker Rights, resources often go into initiatives that sex workers more vulnerable to rights violations, health risks, so-called raids and rescue operations are prime examples.

The impact of this policy is clear that many sex workers lead to pro-sex work organization have lost funding as a result. I can give an example. We had one of the first sex work lead organization in Ghana, One Love. They were all for the PEPFAR funding. When they took the funding three months

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into the funding, they made them sign the anti-prostitution pledge and now that organization is no more because of that.

There are many public health organizations [inaudible] avoid taking a risk of working. Sex workers who revert to narrow programming approach and some organization receive HIV and the trafficking funding have implemented repressive inappropriate programs. The stigma and discrimination sex workers encounter when entering public health systems in the region is rampant. It is time the government in the Caribbean addresses many laws and legalize sex work, because sex workers are human being and deserve the right to be treated as such.

When we have laws that criminalize and stigmatize prostitute sex workers we are doing more harm than good. We need to work with our sex workers, involve them in programs that are there for them, give them the opportunity to make it not all of the decision in self. We need to encourage sex work to organize groups of sex work so that can be educated.

For example, the Ghana sex worker coalition, we have a safe space that allow sex workers to meet and share their ideas and support each other. The laws and policies in the Caribbean is related and the health of sex workers need to be seriously examined and reformed so as to better the health of sex workers across the region. Thank you. [Applause]

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SIENNA BASKIN: We are going to attempt to get our transmission from Calcutta one more time. Again, this is Mariana Bajar [misspelled?] from SWAN, the Sex Workers Rights Advocacy Network in Central and Eastern Europe.

MARIANA BAJAR: Race and recession, violence and impunity [inaudible]. That was a hard job. Also, days and days of hard work and to try to find a joint conclusion for those 16 countries we represented over there. We presented all five pages, which is not so much; it does not sound so much. It was a short version of all the interests of sex workers worldwide, hopefully, but formed by those 16 countries, those regions.

In place of criminalization and penalization of sex work, we concluded that governments must depenalize and decriminalize sex work. Sex workers [inaudible] reforms are essential to ensure safe working spaces and equal access to police protection. Institutional discrimination, rapes, and repression, we concluded governments, ministries, and departments of all levels must change political orders, campaigns or quotes that push police to target sex workers for repression.

Governments must put system in place to investigate and punish human rights violations by the police force. Public authorities and legislators must address system discrimination against sex workers and violence and impunity. Governments need

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to put an immediate halt to impunity for violence against sex workers and in particular police violence.

Discriminatory laws, governments must repeal laws that discriminate against sex workers and people living with HIV. They must oppose mandatory testing and STI treatment and ensure access to voluntarily and confidential HIV services and treatment for undocumented and insured people. [Applause]

Yes, you deserve that. So— [Laughter] [Applause] We come up with a conclusion that governments in the region must depenalize and decriminalize sex work. Sex worker lead law reform is necessary to ensure safe working spaces and equal access to police protection, change political orders, campaigns or quotes that push police to target sex workers for repression. Governments must put systems in place to investigate and punish human rights violations by the police force, put an immediate halt to the impunity for violence against sex workers, and in particular police violence, repeal laws that discriminate against sex workers and people living with HIV, must oppose mandatory testing and treatment and ensure access to voluntarily and confidential HIV services and treatment for undocumented people.

The UN must oppose any policies based on this discriminatory laws, race, criminalization or anti-client

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initiatives. Policies must be based on scientific evidence and human rights rather than morally sick or religious grounds. Finally, the UN and governments must further develop partnership with each other with institutions, foundations, organizations to increase funding for rights-based services that promotes sex workers' health and rights and meaningful involvement. Sex workers in their population in order to combat and repress the human rights violation listed. We are working on that. We demand that, and we hope the future is going to be better for all of us. My brothers and sisters and every sex worker around the world, please, raise your voice. Thank you.

[Applause]

SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you all for listening and for being patient with the audio issues. I think it is actually a very potent image to see a sex worker and trying to talk and being silent. It is because of these immigration policies that exclude sex workers from the United States, that exclude even sex workers who are already in the United States from achieving legal immigration status, keeping people marginalized, in the shadows, and more at risk.

I wanted to mention one more thing before we go to questions, which pertains to this policy and all of the policies we have been talking about especially in the United States. We have a call to change U.S. policy on sex work and

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HIV. We have a website. It is sexworkandhiv.org, very easy to remember. This declaration was drafted by sex workers in the United States in solidarity with sex workers around the world and list specific policies that need to change in the United States. It is a demand to U.S. government to look at these policies and the immigration bar is obviously one them. We have copies of The Call if you would like to read it on the stage; you can come pick one up at the end. Please endorse The Call at that website sexworkandhiv.org.

Now we have half an hour for questions. We have clearly global leaders in the sex workers rights movement. This is a great opportunity to ask questions. We have mics here in the aisles. Please, line up and ask us some questions.

LINA IMERMAN: Hi, there—

SIENNA BASKIN: If you could tell who you are and who you would like to answer your question.

LINA IMERMAN: Is it on? Can everyone hear me?

SIENNA IMERMAN: Yes.

LINA IMERMAN: My Lina Imerman [misspelled?] and I'm from Reuters News. I am just wondering, we are about to begin this very historic conference. It is the first time here in the U.S. in several decades. We are celebrating the fact that the travel ban on people with HIV to the U.S. has been lifted on

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one side. Yet, as we all testified to, it still exists, as we heard from India as well.

I am just wondering and trying to understand what that's supposed to mean for the discussion here today. Trying to bring everyone to the table, yet a big part of the at-risk population is not at the table here. I am just wondering as we look over the next week to Friday, when we walk away what will be lost by not having this group at the table here this week. I would love comments from all of you.

SIENNA BASKIN: Would anyone like to answer that?

MELISSA DITMORE: We cannot have an AIDS-free generation and we cannot end AIDS if we do not include sex workers and drug users in our prevention planning and encouraging them to have full access to treatment, care, and support for HIV. Nothing about us, without us.

SIENNA BASKIN: Would any like to build on that or also reflect on who we are missing here and what that means for the conference?

PYE JACOBSON: Maybe just a little reality check. I found myself as I was sitting here listening to other speakers. At the same time, I am looking at the watch thinking, okay in three hours, a colleague that is current sex worker will be arriving at the border and will she get in? Will I have a phone

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call? Who should I call? This is reality. I am still not sure. Time will tell. Just having to worry about it, it is absurd.

DEON HAYWOOD: I think it is important; all of us have talked about what laws look like around criminalization of sex work and how it hinders people, and this conference has done the same thing. It has kept people locked out from the very thing, where their voices cannot be heard, and when their marginalized and pushed to the side. That is what we all are fighting for, that people will have an opportunity to raise their voice for themselves to speak for themselves. We all are representatives of those communities but how powerful it is to make change when the voices of the people most affected are heard.

At this conference, just like in New Orleans, we talk about the travel ban but persons who are charged with solicitation crime against nature—if you are a convicted sex offender those women who have not been raped or hurt anyone can't move around. Is this conference not doing the very thing that we all are fighting for in our individual regions, is that people should be allowed to be where they need to be.

SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you. Elena also has a comment.

ELENA REYNAGA: Well, I am saying here at this conference and I came in even though I am a sex worker. I mean,

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I did not go through the airport going I am a sex worker, I am sex worker, but I still got in here.

I do miss all of all the women back home and feel we should all be here together and screaming and making noise. We should all be at the march because they wouldn't arrest us there, but I feel we should all be together, being loud.

I have been in these conferences when it's happened in Canada, and I have to say that I feel that this one is very cold and sad because [inaudible] sex worker come to the table and I feel they should all be here.

SIENNA BASKIN: Kholi also has a comment.

KHOLI BUTHELEZI: I think for us in Africa, what is missing is the voice of sex workers themselves. I think it is also important to make sure that sex workers are part of this kind of discussions. They input would be much important for them to be here. Their voices would be much important for them to be heard. I also feel that the sex workers are still marginalized. I think and I believe that it has to come to an end. For them not being part of this formulates very disappointment. Thank you.

SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you. We have another question.

MALE SPEAKER: I just wanted to ask quickly. There has been a pervasive shift in dialog that was touched on a bit earlier that people are using human trafficking and conflating

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that with sex work. I am wondering if somebody could talk a little bit more about that. It is very difficult to politically to say, oh I am fan of human trafficking. I am pro human trafficking.

I think it is very smart messaging. I wonder if some people can talk about the use of that term and how that has been adopted into the anti-sex worker movement and how we can fight to keep that conflation, keep those two things separate because I think they are bleeding together in a very dangerous way.

SIENNA BASKIN: Would anyone like to speak to that? I'm sure we all have a lot to say. Yes, Elena.

ELENA REYNAGA: I think that mixing together sex work and human trafficking it is always intentional both politically and economically. She thinks that the people doing this are pulling power, whether it's political, judicial, or police power. There are always people who have something to gain from outlawing or criminalizing sex work.

It just makes them money and they are protecting businesses by standing up against all of it. She knows several judges and several powerful senators in different countries who own illegal brothels and it is obviously not in their interest to have sex work legalized because they want to still be in power and have all this [inaudible 01:21:32].

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SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you, Elena. I want to give some chance for other people to respond as well. Melissa?

MELISSA DITMORE: Elena is absolutely right that a lot of the motivation to speak about trafficking and to conflate trafficking and prostitution and sex work all as one thing are motivated financially and looking for power, specifically to eliminate the sex industry, which is an unrealistic goal. This is historically bound up in middle class feminist movements aligned with religious right, starting with the founding of the Salvation Army in Victorian England.

Now, we are seeing this again in the United States starting in the 1980's and 90's and continuing now such that the anti-prostitution pledge that I mentioned started in anti-trafficking legislation and was brought by Representative Chris Smith, a very conservative republican from New Jersey in Congress into the PEPFAR legislation. In addition, the anti-trafficking legislation promoted by the U.S. elsewhere in the world has included anti-prostitution statutes and acting in other parts of the world.

SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you. Pye also had a comment.

PYE JACOBSON: Yes, a very brief comment. The reality is the politicians point to us and say look we have these trafficking cases it's terrible. Most of the time it is prison or bonded labor which is not nice and it is highly problematic.

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It is bonded labor, that's a labor rights issue. Labor rights would also take care of that problem.

SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you. Kholi had one more comment. This is a rich topic.

KHOLI BUTHELEZI: My comment would be I think that is a good question and thank you for asking that. The reason in South Africa we calling for decriminalization. We believe that by decriminalizing adult sex worker we would be able to fight trafficking as we are against people that are trafficking people. At the same time, we also need to look at that it is not only sex work and trafficking; people are being trafficked to be domestic workers. Those are the things that we need to look at, not only for trafficking and sex work. Thank you very much.

SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you. We have another question.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Well, I want to know if you have concrete good experiences about efforts to change the rules of not just criminalization sexual work but also restricting sexual workers.

SIENNA BASKIN: Yes, I think so. Do we understand the question? My understanding of it is are there good examples? are there hopeful stories of successful attempts to change laws that criminalize sex workers or restrict sex workers? Dionne

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told us a really great story around that. Maybe you can comment further and then if other have examples as well.

DEON HAYWOOD: The changes we made in Louisiana, having the law changed, it's been tried numerous times. I think the last count somebody told that over the years that the law—the statute—people have tried at least over 20 times to change it. What we think was different is because Louisiana, the way the U.S. is set up, Louisiana is considered a conservative state. The moral code exists.

It was always tried by gay men, gay men, gay men. This time the strategy was to lead by putting the face of women in front of the No Justice Campaign where politicians could use the moral code in the state of Louisiana by saying we will not justify sex between two men, and it never worked. This time we used the face of women, used their stories, how it affected parenting, how it affected reproductive care, just everyday life for them being charge with this.

People told us we weren't going to win. Some of the same things you've heard. They said, a bunch of poor women, there's no way you can stand up to the state of Louisiana. It's not going to change, but they did it. I thought we would be in for a 15-year trial maybe trying to get it done, but it happened within a three-year timeframe. I really think it was because of the voices of the women who lead that campaign. They

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weren't afraid to go talk to politicians. We took trips to the state capital in Baton Rouge and met with lawmakers saying we want you to stop this. You need to stop because it's stopping us from living our lives. Where it did not legalize prostitution but it changed the harshness of the penalties.

Just to say, being from the U.S. South with racism and sexism and poverty, the U.S. South has the highest rates of HIV in the country as well as the state of Louisiana has the highest incarceration rate in the world. For me, this just fuels the fire for all of us and we're just ready for the fight to continue because we did it. Everything that they told us we couldn't do, we made it happen. [Applause]

SIENNA BASKIN: Would anyone else like to speak to that? Yes, go ahead.

PYE JACOBSON: I saw someone get to tell happy stories about Sweden. I can give you—if you even have the story about Sweden. In Sweden, we have a nice thing which is that everybody there is going to 80-percent of their income when they are ill from the state health insurance. We have a lot of sex workers who pay taxes because you have to.

It is illegal not to. Yet we didn't have the right to the state's health insurance as it's based on expected income, and you can't have an expected income when your clients are criminals. We pushed some cases through the system. It was

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clear that people were paying taxes or clear that people were having an income. Two weeks ago, the state's health insurance company came back with new guidelines that sex workers are now entitled to— [Applause]

SIENNA BASKIN: We have another question.

KEUWAN MACLYN: Actually, mine is not a question.

SIENNA BASKIN: Oh, a comment.

KEUWAN MACLYN: Good morning everyone. I'm Keuwan Maclyn [misspelled?] from Uganda. Just a supplement to my team from Africa, mine is actually an appeal. I am happy when I hear everybody expressing themselves, the challenges, the success stories as well, but at the same time deep in my heart I feel it's still a very long journey after seeing Mariana presented from India. They are like in a jungle forest where they can't really be heard. They're being forced—actually they're being—I saw them as victims just like the gentleman is asking the trafficking—how they conflate the trafficking and sex work.

Now, mine is just an appeal and an appeal to the U.S. government, to Barack Obama, to really, I mean, amend, if possible, really amend, I mean the law about the PEPFAR pledge. If they can include the human race best approach in all the programs that address sex work issues. Then, the other thing if they can also decriminalized the travel ban.

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Just like myself, no different from Elena, I didn't tell the embassy that I'm a sex worker or I'm working with a sex organization. I go to another organization to recommend me to go to apply for my visa. That kind of disguise, walking when your head is bowed down, it's really, really makes us victims.

I think this is the thing for us to act. Then another appeals goes to my African countries and they know they are here, our leaders, our presidents, they are listening they are hearing this, let them decriminalize adult sex workers with all the criminalizing policies and laws. Again, it's to adult sex work; if that is not done they are guilty of killing sex workers. Thank you.

SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you. Keuwan Maclyn was also almost a speaker but we didn't know if we'd have her in the U.S. or in Calcutta. I'm glad you had a chance to talk about Uganda as well. We have another question.

MALE SPEAKER: Actually this is the qualities regarding the policy and law. It is a conflicting issues all over the world that on the one hand many countries have criminalized the sex workers and on the basis of the penal policy of the particular countries, police has been harassing to the sex workers. This attitude of the police has been pushing the sex workers to more vulnerability.

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On the one hand, we have to address—the state has to provide some type of policy that the sex workers will not be pushed into the vulnerable position. At this situation, how to harmonize and how to make up such a collusive policy that the police could not harass the sex workers on the grounds of penal policy of a particular country. Then to make such an environment that the sex workers will not be pushed toward the vulnerable situations. Thank you.

SIENNA BASKIN: That's a complex question. Does anyone want to speak to that or do you need a—you had trouble hearing? Okay. May I try to summarize your question? Did you want to speak? Okay. I believe your question is how do we create a situation where police are not harassing sex workers—

MALE SPEAKER: Yes, yes.

SIENNA BASKIN: —and recognize that this is a really big problem that police violence against sex workers without also recognizing that not all sex workers are victims. Is that your question?

MALE SPEAKER: Yes, how do we know that the—how to balance the situation. What sort of policy or legal mechanism, legal [inaudible] to be framed to address this thing; the policies all over the world?

SIENNA BASKIN: Okay. Would anyone like to tackle that one?

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MARIAM EDWARDS: We cannot change the harassment from the police if sex work is not legalized. Once it is a criminalized act in the country, once the laws on policy don't change, there will always be the harassment meted out to sex workers. For starters, we have to change the laws and laws have to change before anything can happen to sex workers.

SIENNA BASKIN: Kholi would like to add and then Deon.

KHOLI BUTHELEZI: I think by calling for integralization for the sex work that can change and with your support. Thank you.

SIENNA BASKIN: And Deon.

DEON HAYWOOD: Anytime I'm talking about police it's difficult for me. One of the things that happens in New Orleans in particular is that police are taught to charge up. Even though they could've charged women with prostitution, which would've been a misdemeanor, they charge them with the crime against nature and I think we really have to target policies and how these laws are mapped simply because the police officers have the power to charge without even seeing the act. Without admission we call it just a talking crime.

For example, we had a situation where a young woman who had just come home from the war and she was on her way to the veterans hospital to be treated for PTSD, post-traumatic stress syndrome. She served six years I want to say she was in Iraq.

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When she was walking down the street a car pulled up and said would you like a ride and she said, no I'm fine and he said where are you going?

She said I'm on my way to the VA hospital and he said, are you a vet? I'm a vet, yes, I served, you served, and you want a ride? She got in and then of course it was an undercover sting and she was charged with crime against nature. We have many stories like this where people weren't even doing anything; walking down the street, majority of our transgender clients, they say that they're guilty for walking while Trans.

That just because of who they are the police will target them. I feel like the only way we can deal with that is really going inside and really getting them to change those policies of how police charge people; also really working with the community to know their rights. So many people in oppressed countries or situations, even for us in the U.S., when you're oppressed you don't know that you have rights.

I laugh every time I hear human rights because most people in the U.S. don't even know what that is, especially in the U.S. South. We started doing community engagements around knowing your rights. What you should say. What you shouldn't say. What you have a right to do. We think that has changed a little bit.

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We also went as high as we could to the U.S. Department of Justice and we had them do a report on the treatment of police officers of people of color and sex workers and people in the LGBT community. I think we have to target all of it on all levels and police definitely need training. I hate the word "cultural sensitivity," because I don't think many of them know what that is, they just need to know how to treat people like human beings. Many of them don't know how to do that.

SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you. Okay. We have a few more questions. I just want to let people know; unfortunately we're going to have to wrap up at around 11:05. There's another event coming up in the session. I'm going to with you, yes? Please.

KATRINA: Hi, my name's Katrina and I'm a lawyer from Canada where there's a major movement to adopt the Nordic or Swedish model. I'm wondering whether you are also facing that same issue, that same conflict in your countries. How you're resisting that and if you have any advice for myself as an ally for sex workers in Canada or to sex workers in Canada about mobilizing against the adoption of that legal framework? Thanks.

SIENNA BASKIN: I think the question is we seeing the Swedish model which is about criminalizing clients; are we seeing that having an influence in our countries like they are

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in Canada? Would anyone like to speak to that? I could speak to that, from the U.S. Okay, I will. Yes, it's being touted as a success that should be adopted I think in many different countries.

In the U.S., I always find it a little ironic that people talk about the Swedish model so much because sex workers are criminalized in the U.S. whereas they are—at least not sex work is not a crime in Sweden. To adopt the Swedish model we first have to decriminalize sex work which no one who's promoting this model is actually interested in doing.

I think it's very important to hear how the criminalization of clients is impacting sex workers in Sweden, in Norway and in other countries that have adopted this model and are saying that it's a success without necessarily the voices of sex workers being heard. Would anyone else like to address that?

PYE JACOBSON: I guess I should say something quick. I think it is disgusting, a lot of countries, Sweden has adopted it, Israel just did, Iceland has some kind of version of it so there are a lot of other countries that is talking about it. I would say the only good thing with the Swedish model is I got to travel a lot to talk about it. I think the only advice I can give if anyone is dealing with this problem is ask them for

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the evidence because there's actually no evidence. There's no evaluation.

They have some numbers on street workers but let's face it, it's cold in Sweden and if you can work indoors you will. They actually don't know what they are talking about and they really don't care. When we point out that this law has made it worse for sex workers, they're already most marginalized, they say, we know but it's worth it to send a message, right. Ask for the evidence, there is none and take it from there.

SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you. I think we have time for one more question, please?

MALE SPEAKER: This is not a question; I'm going to plug something.

SIENNA BASKIN: Plug away, yes.

MALE SPEAKER: For those who don't know, the Global Commission on HIV and the Law has released—launched its reports. Sian referred right away, too a lot of the fabulous panelists who have contributed to this document referred to it. It's available on HIVlawcommission.org. I think it gives a serious pathway to leader reform and how to work with some of the questions that were asked like, on how do you work with police?

The report in itself is short but the web site has rich information on success stories, many difficulties for instance

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law enforcement and et cetera. If you work with policy makers, that you are a lawmaker or a policy maker, this is something you've got to arm yourself with if you seriously mean to kind of change things at the ground level. Just on the question of working with police, this is not rocket science; it can be done if there's political will to do it.

I'm a lawyer who's worked with sex workers and has worked with police, et cetera. If you want to do it there's a way to do it. It's non-mindboggling. If the bureaucracy really wants to work with the health industry, the home ministry, et cetera. in whichever country you're from, it's been done and sex workers have benefited through that process. I think there's a lot of information in this report and I think it hopefully empowers communities.

SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you. One last question.

MALE SPEAKER: One last—thank you. Thank you to all that speak because I come from probably the smallest country represented at this conference. I'm from Papua New Guinea. Just to add to the last comment, Papua New Guinea in its own effort, we also inherited Draconian British law through the Australian administration colonially and therefor sex work and sodomy is a criminal offense in Papua New Guinea. We had our first national dialogue on HIV law reform and human rights in the state room of our parliament building last year. We have

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brought a few reports of that, so anyone interested in reading that please see me. Thank you.

SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you so much. I think we have just a tiny bit more minutes and I wondered if any of the panelists had questions for each other. Because this is such a rich opportunity to dialogue from between nations, between regions, just wanted to throw that out there if anyone would like to ask each other questions. I didn't prepare them for this.

Well I have a question that I thought of, which is maybe to Sian and Kholi. Maybe others might also speak to this, which is we're talking about policy reform and law reform, what impact does that have and is that the right road to take in countries where the law is not strong? Where the law that exists is not respected, is law and policy reform still important? If anyone would like to jump in-

SIAN MASEKO: Yes, definitely. I think sort of speaking from the context of Zimbabwe; I think that it's crucial to always be talking about law reform and always being gauged in issues around policy. Just picking up again on that question of police, one of the biggest challenges that I'm sure resonates with a lot of countries, is that police act outside the remit of the law. Often violations occur at various different levels.

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When for example, police are confiscating condoms from sex workers we're looking at issues to do with health and the right to health. I think that this is why it's very important to look at laws and policies even if the rule of law is not really working in the way that it should. I think it's really important to still be pushing those points home because it's really crucial to be looking at all aspects of sex workers lives and the impact of police action and issues around healthcare providers, et cetera. I think that we do need to be looking at laws and policies.

SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you so much. Deon, you had one more point?

DEON HAYWOOD: It's easy to say that the laws in certain countries aren't strong but again, and I'm speaking from a certain region in the U.S. where people who make laws do what they want to do. Right now we have a supreme court judge which is in the U.S. the people whom make THE decisions about certain things said, this violates the 14th Amendment and yet the state of Louisiana, the governor, the attorney general has yet to take people off the registry. We still have women to this day right after the lawsuit was filed; we got 50 letters, over 50 letters in the first week of women serving time.

I'm not talking about six months because they've been charged at least three times; they're serving 20-year

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sentences, 8-year sentences for sex work really or failure to register. The laws we still have to battle in a way I feel like being in the U.S. South is like being in what we call a third world country, it's not much different to me. I just feel like it's really important and opportunities like this to show people that even though the U.S. is considered a high-income country, some of its people are living like the very people that they claim it's so wrong over there, it's so poor, it's this, it's that.

Many of you across the country saw how people were treated after a national disaster like hurricane Katrina, it looked like Haiti to me and I'm from—was born and raised in New Orleans. It's just amazing how it's the same, it's not much different. I think that's the important take-away is that even the U.S. sits where it is and makes decisions for other people and makes it hard for people not to take what they offer. Many of us are living that same reality here. Thank you.

SIENNA BASKIN: Thank you so much and thank you to all the panelists. Many of these panelists will be speaking at events throughout the week, I hope you see them again and hear more of what they have to say. I also invite you to check out the sex worker networking zone in the global village where you may be able to see more of what's happening in Calcutta.

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Thank you so much for attending. I'm sure the speakers will be available outside if you have further questions. Thank you.

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