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**Celebrating the Frontline: The Red Ribbon Award for
Innovative Community Responses to AIDS
Kaiser Family Foundation
July 25, 2012**

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KEVIN MOODY: I want to thank you for coming and I want to welcome you to here on the behalf of the Red Ribbon Award Partners, the AIDS 2012 Conference, UNAIDS, Irish AID, GNP+, Stop AIDS Now, ICW Global and ECastle [misspelled?]. The reason we're here is to honor to honor the Red Ribbon Award winners, these are the leaders of the AIDS response. Why is this important? Community organizations are one the front line, they provide services and advocated for better services. As Phil Wilson wrote, let's not get it twisted nothing has ever happened in HIV that was not driven by the communities most impacted [applause].

Seven million people need access to treatment by 2015 and it will be communities that get us there. the Red Ribbon Award is an important acknowledgment of the critical role of communities in the AIDS response. I have the pleasure of introducing our first speaker who is Michel Sidibe, the UNAIDS Executive Director. Please join me in welcoming Michel Sidibe [applause].

MICHELE SIDIBE: Thank you very much. Let me start by saying that we are very privileged to have with us today our Princess of Norway. She is a person with a commitment, she was always fighting to make sure that we can build the bridge generations making sure that we will not just continue to invest in activism which was started 30 years ago.

Making sure that we immerse young people with knowledge, with the capacity to be able to continue to bring this innovation

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which is needed to make the change. I also really want to acknowledge the presence of one of the strongest U.S. Congressman who has always been with us fighting for human rights, making sure that we could be able to get the resources when it was not easy to continue to put people in treatment and also give a voice to the voiceless.

I am also pleased to welcome the French Minister of Health, it a great honor for us to have you with us today honorable Minister of Health. We know that you have always been committed to these issues, you are demonstrating to us with your presence here that these issues matter to you. That it is not just about AIDS, it's about global health, it about transformation of the world and to make this world.

We are at the turning point as I said at the beginning of this conference, that is the best of times and it is the worst of times like Dickens said. But we'll focus more on the best of times today because I personally believe this Red Ribbon Award is a moment to just give us a hope.

It is people at the grass roots level, people who have been fighting and creating a social dynamic which will help us to continue to make change happen. Sometimes those people are not necessarily at the front line, we don't think of them as enactors of change, we always think that are passive beneficiaries of services we are giving to people. I can that today if we have eight million people in treatment, if we have been able to break the trajectory of this epidemic it is because those people were

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sometimes invisible.

Those people who were working at the community level making the interface between service providers and the community making sure that demand creation could be there and I really want you to applaud and acknowledge them [applause] and I just want to say that I'm grateful for their imagination and their hard work. There is nothing that can get us to zero, I said nothing that can get us to zero being able to really transfer competence, knowledge and resources to the community level. Making sure that those groups who were working at that level could have the possibility to continue to reach unreachable groups and to continue to really give services.

I will of course not let you go without saying that the only thing that still an outrage for me is the fact that in 2012, when we have all the tools to beat the epidemic we still have to fight prejudice, stigma, discrimination, I can even say exclusion and criminalization. Not only in our homes but in the street, at the police station, and in the courts.

So I think it's very important for us to use this moment to say that the last miles that we have to walk together to reach zero will only happen if give those people who are hiding a chance to come out of this shadow and be part of our service delivery system.

Thank you very much for being with us, thanks for giving us a chance to continue to fight for those people [applause].

KEVIN MOODY: Thank you Michele. Now we're going to ask

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Mr. Sidibe to help us by giving out the awards, Michele can you walk with me?

MICHELE SIDIBE: Okay.

KEVIN MOODY: Thank you. In the category Prevention Among By People Who Use Drugs, our first winner is Afraye Sabz Association, Iran [applause]. Thank you. We'll move onto our second winner in this category Espolea, Mexico. Thank you very much, thanks Michele and I'd like to please ask a representative from this category of winners to say a few words.

MALE SPEAKER: Thank you all, hello. We are so honored to receive this award and behalf of Afraye Sabz and the whole team as Espolea I would like to acknowledge first the many grass roots organizations that are working to provide services to people that need them. The various partner organizations that have helped open the door for young people to participate in the decisions that affect our lives. Organizations through which we are able to do our work and reach even more people and decision makers who have helped to establish an enabling environment for us to deliver.

A lot still needs to be done and we acknowledge that to be recipients of this award it is a major reminder of the great deal of work that remains to be done when it comes to HIV and people who use drugs, particularly young ones. So far we have been able to grow our efforts to do sensitization and advocacy to provide information in an attempt to jointly work with other partners around policies and programs for a more effective

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response to HIV in area of drug use.

We have managed to participate in establishing operational working framework including networks of people, particularly people living with HIV and organizations that work with these important issues as well, but a lot of challenges remain.

Among which, we prioritize; mobilizing to ensure that life saving harm reduction services are accessible to people who need them including young drug users and considering non-injectable use of drugs stimulate drugs. Advocate to create a supporting environment and the political will to foster harm reduction. Mobilize financial resources and funding for organizations that work on harm reduction and drug policy in order to achieve consistency on the work we perform. Increase awareness on the added vulnerabilities that women and especially young women have to face when they get involved with the use of drugs.

Once again we would like to thank the U.N. family especially UNAIDS and all the partners behind the Red Ribbon Award and would like to restate how honored we are. Because we see it as a great indicator which encourages us to continue our efforts and to keep walking towards this common goal in hopes that we can foster more changes. Thank you very much.

KEVIN MOODY: Thank you very much. It's now my distinct pleasure to introduce to you our next speaker, her Royal Highness the Crown Princess Mette-Marit of Norway who is a UNAIDS Goodwill

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Ambassador and our Key Note Speaker. Please give a warm welcome to her Royal Highness the Crown Princess Mette-Marit [applause].

H.R.H. CROWN PRINCESS METTE-MARIT: Ladies and gentlemen, last month in Delhi I met a beautiful girl called Manisha misspelled?]. Manisha is eight years, she's HIV positive and she has a T.B. co-infection. Manisha nearly died because she had no access to medication, today she's on treatment thanks to Operation ASHA, a small organization that offers supportive services to T.B. and HIV patients. Operation ASHA was founded by a very talkative Indian doctor called Shirley. Shirley took action because she realized there were huge undiscovered needs for treatment and support among young people with HIV and T.B. in New Delhi.

Community mobilization has always been at the heart of the HIV response. Many of the hard won gains in the 30 year of HIV are results of people on the ground like Shirley and many, many other taking action in face of adversity. The history of HIV is also a history of people's movement. From the beginning, ordinary people with extraordinary will and power have occupied the core of our movement propelling us forward. Civil society, user and peer groups together with dedicated service organizations and activists have expressed impatience and demanded action.

This week people have marched here in Washington D.C. demanding world leaders to fulfill their promise to end AIDS. In New Delhi people have hit the streets to demand treatment and

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prevention, in South Africa they're calling for gender equity. In Russia advocates are working on harm reduction for people who use drugs. In every part of the earth people are advocating and want fulfillment of their human rights to basic health care.

The Red Ribbon Award rightly honors community based organizations who lead our response. The organizations have the courage to find the injustices that fuel HIV and to provide critical health services when governments fail. Still there is a limit to what drugs, services, structures and professions can do unless it's matched by people that understand what HIV means in their community, what it takes to stop transmission, to test and to be treated and what the roots are to vulnerability, stigma and discrimination.

Often the organizations work on tiny budgets under incredibly difficult circumstances including fear of arrest, violence or worse. The Red Ribbon Award cuts across all the red tape, the bureaucracies and international territories, all the conflicting priorities and global discussions. It honors action, it honors action on the ground.

Last month in Norway I was very happy and fortunate to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of ACCEPT the Norwegian Community Center for People Living with HIV. It's a very special place where I have worked as a volunteer and every time I come there I'm reminded of the importance of community engagement. People who are affected directly is our most important resource in the AIDS response because they are the ones who know what it's all

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about.

Therefore, ACCEPT is not only a safe haven where people experience understanding, belonging and inclusion, it's also an important research when Norway is shaping its HIV policies. But most of all, ACCEPT is a place where people can be free of stigma and discrimination in their everyday lives. One of my friends there expressed it this way; sometimes I feel like I'm regarded just as the one who's HIV positive. At ACCEPT I'm allowed to be myself, the whole of me.

Through our 30 year history of AIDS, powerful activists, men and women have been on the barricades. They have done an incredible job which we benefit from today and will continue to benefit from in the future. Fortunately today a new generation is ready to take leadership. It's my firm belief that young people must be in the center of the next step of the action for change, young people must be recognized and given space and they are more than ready to take responsibility.

Here at the International AIDS Conference, we are privileged to be in the midst in of an incredible meeting of activist, scientists, programmers and decision makers but we also recognize the many young people who are not able to participate in this event. Young people who are working every day in their local communities to create a more equitable world.

Ever day 3,000 young men are infected with HIV, the number is devastating when we reflect upon it. Young woman aged 15 to 24 are twice as likely to become infected as young men.

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Violence and threat of violence hampers the ability of young women and adolescents to make smart decisions and protect themselves from HIV infection.

At a community center Nicaragua some years ago I met an 18 year old mother, Manuela. Manuela was involved in HIV related community work because she, herself had been affected through rape. Her main motivation was to prevent her little baby daughter and other girls in the next generation from experiencing what she had been through when they grow up.

This to me, is leadership at its core. But the reason we need young people like Manuela in the response is not only because she has shown extraordinary leadership, it's because HIV is everybody's business. We need Manuela to tell us what made her vulnerable.

I think we often underestimate the fact that it's not young people who need us, we need them, we need their experience. We need the capacity and insight of young people in a particular way because young people use clear language and young people are informed.

Young people have the capacity and the tools to connect the dots and help us face reality. Young people get incredibly much done with very, very limited means. Young people's influential power is growing because of global networks and social media. Young people advocate for resources, action and accountability not just as a global movement but in every country.

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Young people are ready to challenge the silos and taboos that still surround HIV in our families and our communities. Global Youth Coalition (GYCA) in Egypt is a leading example of this work. This is why I believe young people should get more space for leadership, more public attention and more substantial funding. They have proved their ability to deliver now we need to do the same.

As a UNAIDS Special Representative I am very happy to see the U.N. system is currently in a process of transforming the way they are working with and involving youth and I would like to give a little applause to Michele for his incredible work in this manner [applause].

Ladies and gentlemen, every moment starts at the grass roots. The Red Ribbon Award honors those who deserve to be honored the most, the impact of organizations mobilizing people in communities always defies our expectations. Every person who is reached with HIV education or accompanied to see a doctor so they feel safe to access medical care or supported to have a healthy pregnancy makes a difference.

Every time a young person living with HIV speaks out against stigma and discrimination our world improves. Every time when people most affected by HIV; women, people who use drugs, sex workers, men who have sex with men and transgender people demand to be included, the HIV response grows stronger and more effective.

We celebrate you and are inspired by your ability and

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commitment to make a difference. When I think about Manisha in New Delhi I am confident that she is alive thanks to people like you. Today we honor those who bring hope to Manesha and other people of all ages in a similar situation. The Indian writer Arundhati Roy said another world is not only possible, she's on her way. On a quiet day I can hear her breathing. Today we honor those who are creating our world anew. Thank you [applause].

KEVIN MOODY: Thank you, her Royal Highness will now hand out the awards. In the category Stopping new HIV infections in children and keeping mothers alive, the first winner is Giramatsiko Post Test Club, Uganda [applause]. Thank you, and the second wiener in this category is The Global Youth Coalition on AIDS, Egypt [applause]. Thank you, thank you very much. I would now like to ask a representative from this category of winners to come forward and say a few words.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of Global Youth Collation on HIV/AIDS, Egypt and Giramatsiko Post Text Club, Uganda I would love to pass a vote of thanks to UNAID and all other partners who have put energy, time, resources to recognize the work done by CBO's and NGO's like us. Especially encouraging to stop new infections among children and keeping their mothers alive and healthy. I would also love to thank our donors who have supported and trusted us to do this work.

Saidreda [misspelled?] from Uganda says that 18 years ago she was unable to protect her son from contracting HIV, he's now

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living with HIV. But today, working with women peer educators who commit their time to work with her with no pay she's able to protect others and help mothers to deliver their babies free of HIV [applause].

This award should actually be for encouragement to these women so that they know the work is valued at the international level. I also want to share with you a quote said by an Egyptian woman who's living with HIV and who has suffered a lot with healthcare services, when she's taken part in our of our GYCA Egypt activities. She's always wondered if healthcare providers deny her that much then why should her expect others to understand? She thought it was great to have people like us who let people know exactly what she suffers and who make people wonder for a time if they are living with HIV.

I believe women living with HIV are also living with their fear, stigma and discrimination and that's why we shall continue mobilizing communities for prevention, care and treatment. That's why we ask you to stay connected because together we're greater than AIDS. Thank you [applause].

KEVIN MOODY: Thank you, thank you very much. We're going to change the program just slightly because our next speaker has to run to the Capital to make a vote so what we're going to do is we're going to ask - we're very honored to have the presence of Congressman Jim McDermott who is going to give us our next talk and please give him a warm welcome. Thank you [applause].

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REP. JIM MCDERMOTT: Thank you very much for accommodating the Congress schedule. I'm Congressman Jim McDermott and I want to thank Michele and the other presenters for inviting me to participate in this event. To be among the global leaders in this epidemic is really an honor.

I'm a medical doctor and I've been involved with HIV since almost 30 years ago when I was living in Canchussa [misspelled?]. I was there at the beginning of the epidemic and saw it when it was a day of death sentences to everyone who had the disease.

So watching the epidemic over the last 30 years has really been an increasingly pleasurable experience for me because I remember when it was really bad. We've still got things to do but we can see an AIDS-free generation ahead of us in the future and PEPFAR is I think the essence of that and I'm pushing in the Congress to keep the money there so it will go forward around the world [applause].

I'm particularly pleased to see this event in Washington D.C. because I always thought the travel ban was baloney and we should get rid of it and we finally did [applause].

Michele and UNAIDS has done a tremendous job and this Red Ribbon Award which recognizes the most outstanding community based responses in AIDS in 2012 is real honor. I understand it is the leading award for innovative communicative service in communities. I spent a lot of time in the developing world, I've been to 90 countries around the world and I know that \$10,000

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goes a long way in a lot of places. So I know the funds will make some - a couple of worthy organizations have the ability to extend their arms to more people.

The following awardees fall under the category of treatment, cure and support, these groups have provided outstanding care for those living with the virus and for many dying with the virus. I'm pleased to present the first award to Kenya Hospices and Palliative Care Association. As a medical doctor and a lawmaker I've been active in not only HIV and AIDS but also on the issue of end of life care in the United States. This is such an important topic because we all die eventually.

Woody Allen said nobody gets out of live alive, but these groups - not everyone is able to die with serenity and dignity, and what these groups have done is set as a goal that everybody should be helped through this tough passage in life. The prevalence of AIDS and HIV in Kenya remains stubbornly high so not surprisingly a hospice care is invariably a major surface to people who are dying with AIDS.

In fact, 27-percent of the hospice patients in Kenya die from AIDS. This is a very special type of work; helping people die with dignity and I believe it has a real spiritual dimension to it because you are helping people in the most difficult thing that we as human beings have to face.

In 2007 Kenya Hospice has trained over 1500 Kenyans, healthcare professionals in palliative care. In 2011 they launched a program to establish palliative care units in a number

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of hospitals nationwide in Kenya. They also launched Kenya's first national curriculum for palliative care in partnership with the Ministry of Health.

As they advocate for access to pain relieving medications as a human right, analgesics such as morphine they are radically expanding the capacity to ease the pain of those who are dying. It is a noble and humane contribution and we thank you for your efforts.

The second group receiving an award in this category is the Positive Women's Network based in Sri Lanka. P.W.N. was established in 2009. It runs two drop-in centers that are run by women living with HIV for women living with HIV. This is very important. We face so many challenges in fighting the epidemic, but I can't think of a more pernicious than the stigma and discrimination against people living with AIDS, particular women.

According to UNAIDS, Sri Lanka has a relatively low level of HIV, but in the report it says, "Under reporting cases is due to low knowledge about how HIV is transmitted and barriers to seeking services due to stigma and discrimination." This discrimination often prevents people from getting tested and for getting care. It can literally cost people their lives.

On the other hand, we know that you have a safe place where you can get educated about your condition and get

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confidential support that literally saves lives. Heterosexual transmission is the overwhelming dominant mode of HIV transmission in Sri Lanka. It is fitting that UNAIDS recognizes such a top notch program that is focusing on the care of women. Thank you and my congratulations to the groups who got it.

KEVIN MOODY: Thank you, Congressman McDermott. We'll now hand out the awards in the category in Treatment, Care and Support. The first winner is Kenya Hospices and Palliative Care Association, Kenya. [Applause]. Thank you. Thank you.

The second winner in this category is the Positive Women's Network, P.W.N. Plus from Sri Lanka. [Applause].

Can we please have a round of applause before he has to leave for Congressman McDermott? Thank you. [Applause].

Now may I ask the representative from this category of winners to take the stage? Thank you.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you, Honorable Minister, for that lovely introduction of the two organizations and thank you everybody for being here this afternoon to witness this event. We have, on behalf of the Positive Women's Network of Sri Lanka and Kenya Hospital Palliative Care Center in Kenya, we are humbled and honored to receive the Red Ribbon Award and really we should thank the Red Ribbon Award partners because there are many partners involved in this and UNAIDS for coordinating this

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for giving us the opportunity to share the work that we do with everybody.

As the Honorable Minister said, the Positive Women's Network focuses on improving on the quality level of women living with HIV in Sri Lanka by providing a safe, secure and confidential environment free of stigma and they emphasize a lot of trans-stigma.

The discrimination where people living with HIV, especially women, can obtain counseling services, financial and emotional support and I really want to say just having shared a few with days Quincy, she might seem small, but she's very strong in the work she does. We really need to clap for Quincy. She started the organization herself. She's really a strong woman.

For Kenya Hospice and Palliative Care Session, which David and I work for, we focus on improving the quality of life of people living with HIV and not just the people, but also we go beyond the patient or the person and extend our services to the families through our partners.

Then again, we take care of other people with other life-threatening illnesses apart from HIV/AIDS, like cancer and other illnesses. This is mainly through scaling up services and palliative care, looking at training education, integration services and working with the government and the Ministry of

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Health [inaudible] to ensure that palliative care will eventually be integrated at all levels of care starting at high levels to the community level as well.

We wish to acknowledge all others for supporters who support us in the work that we do. It's not only us succeeding but many other people behind us. We stand on the shoulders of giants to do this work and we really want to acknowledge them because without them, it would not be possible for us to accomplish what we have done so far.

There are other communities that we work with and are here because of the communities really, our governments and ministries of health because without their support, then we are doing zero work. Our partners, friends and members who share the same vision with us and continue to ensure better services for the patients and their families and our donors believe in what we do and continue to support us because again, without the donors, we would not be successful.

There is still a lot that we need to do. This is not end, this is just the beginning. People living with HIV need to have a good quality of life and have access to essential medicines, ARVs and other medications, including medicines to relieve symptoms like severe pain, which is mostly suffered by about 60-percent of people with HIV in advanced stages and is

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mostly neglected, especially in developing countries. We need to also have access to pain medication when they need it.

We need to also look at the social rights of people living with HIV are protected and also that there is no stigma if you have HIV, that people are aware of the legal rights and that this is also respected.

We believe that together, we can all accomplish more, therefore let us join hands in our efforts to ensure quality of holistic care that focuses on dignity and better living and the Minister talked about better dying. It's about living your lives, you should have a good quality of life and even when you are dying, you should have a good death and not a bad death.

Once more, thank you for your support and encouragement. Thank you. [Applause].

KEVIN MOODY: Thank you very much. Before we move onto our video address; I just want to say how important when we look at their panel, it's really important that people are coming out for community. I also have the honor to acknowledge the presence of her royal Queen Mother, Awindor, of the Ashanti Kingdom of Ghana. [Applause]. Will you please stand? Please stand. Don't let anyone tell you that community is not important.

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Now I have the honor of introducing a video from Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel laureate and member of parliament for Myanmar.

AUNG SAN SUU KYI: Thank you for inviting me to address the 12th International AIDS Conference. As the subject that we are focusing on is community responses to AIDS, it gives me an opportunity to discuss community activities which are extremely important for those societies like ours trying to achieve democratization.

By strengthening the community, we strengthen our chances of achieving democracy and of building up strong democratic institutions. I've been particularly interested in the difference between NGOs, non-governmental organizations and community services, community sponsors, community activities. Community activities are broader in the sense that they bring in all members of the community, not just those who have been organized as non-governmental organizations.

Community responses to AIDS are not as strong as we might wish in Burma. In fact, I wonder whether we can really talk as yet of community responses to the problem of HIV/AIDS. Although there are a number of – I cannot really say NGOs because some of them have not been officially registers as NGOs – but there are a number of groups and organizations informally put together, have been working for HIV/AIDS patients, but

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response, responses as a community are as yet almost unknown. We need to make our communities in Burma when there's communities, town communities and broader communities, aware of the importance of community response. We need to make our people understand widely that this is a problem which we can handle together so that it need no longer be a problem.

I would like to learn from those of you who have been particularly innovative with regard to community responses that we also in Burma may follow your example. I'm speaking to you not as somebody who has a particular message to deliver, but as somebody who would like you to give a message to us, who would like you to teach us how in Burma we may develop community responses to HIV/AIDS.

Basically, of course, our people need to understand what HIV really is. We need to understand that this is not something that we need to be afraid of, that people who have contracted HIV need not be discriminated against, that they are not a danger to society at large. Once this message has got through, we will be able to base activities on the natural compassion of human beings and of course, as the great majority of people in Burma are Buddhist, there's a special emphasis on the value of compassion.

Based on this, and based on wide community education, I hope that we will be able to become one of those innovative

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societies where we approach a problem as human beings, as intelligent caring human beings. In this way, we will be able to handle not just the issue of HIV/AIDS, but issues related to those who are subjected to particular suffering, particular discrimination.

I wish your conference very well. I wish, and I'm sure my wish will be granted, that you may come up with new ideas and new ways with which we will be able to approach the issue of HIV/AIDS and make those suffering from HIV/AIDS happier and safer in our world. Thank you. [Applause].

KEVIN MOODY: Now it's my pleasure to invite UN Special Envoy for AIDS in the Asia and Pacific, Mr. Prasada Rao, to come and present the awards to the winners in the category "Advocacy and Human Rights". [Applause].

The first winner is Initiative Group 'Patients In Control' from the Russian Federation. [Applause]. Thank you.

I ask the second winner to come up. It's the Delhi Network of Positive People, DNP+. [Applause]. Okay, thank you.

Now if I could, I'd like to a representative from this category of winners to come and take the stage.

MALE SPEAKER: Thank you, Kevin, thank you everyone. Thank you, Madame San Suu Kyi. It's a real honor to speak after her. I wish she is here.

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As we all know, people who come for this conference, that since donkey's ears, we know that all HIV response would be human rights. It's easy to go, it's easy to write, it's easy to keep in the books or whatever material that you got it, but when one tried to defend human rights or advocate for human rights, you know the result, it's really, really difficult. It's not easy.

Many of the people doesn't like us, all these people who defend human rights or people who advocate for human rights because we are challenging status goal. We are on the street, we are always at risk for police arrest. Yesterday targeting people arrested in a march and you see that Aung San Suu Kyi was how many years she was house arrested. So when people really do this human rights work, advocacy work, it's really, really difficult to do in the real world.

At the same time no one really wants to associate with us because we are challenging people, we are making uncomfortable people, but today, I'm really thankful for the organizer of this award that finally, I know this in this, there advocacy and human rights category, I really thank you for organizer. Just a thank you that I think that by introducing this award, I think in the days to come the grass root people, those who are advocating for human rights, should get more funding to aid.

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Lastly, I want to thank that I would not be able to stand here because of the people who are not here. Many of them are already six feet under; because of them we are here today. So, I really want to thank all the people who are living with HIV/AIDs who already pass away and all the commands in DNP and in [inaudible] Control who continue to fight for people, irrespective of all the dread. Thank you, everyone.

KEVIN MOODY: Thank you, Lim. I've just been told that there's even more leadership in the room and among others, we have the UN Special Envoy for AIDS in the Caribbean, Mr. Edward Green. Where is he? There he is! Thank you! [Applause].

It's my pleasure now to introduce our last speaker, last but definitely not least, the Minister of Health and Social Affairs of France, Marisol Touraine. She will be interpreted by Joy Backrie [misspelled?], who's from the Red Ribbon Award Secretariat. Please join me in a warm welcome for Minister Touraine. [Applause].

MARISOL TOURAINE: Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon to each of you. I am very delighted to be here today and to take part in the Red Ribbon Ceremony. I would like thank very warmly the UNAIDS as well the executive director, Michel Sidibe, for this opportunity to award innovative achievement in community work in the response to AIDS. We come in a few minutes to inspiring winners, but let me first say a few words

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on where we stand today and how France's efforts contribute to this global endeavor and as a French minister and a member of French government, I will continue in French.

Since the beginning of the epidemic, France is fully engaged in the responsibility of HIV and on all fronts. France is at the full front at the field of research, prevention and supporting associations, but also in the continued strengthening in the response of our care system.

Active in all four initiatives at international level, France supports the Global Fund against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. France is fully engaged within UNAIDS. France participated in the creation of UNITAID, an innovative program that has proven itself in its efforts to provide access to treatment against AIDS, Malaria and TB.

Three quarters of children receiving antiretrovirals across the world thanks to UNITAID. France also shares its medical expertise to build the capacity of health systems in many countries, including through the GIP Esther. The president of the French Republic recalled these points in his video speech. More than ever, our country's mobilized in the response against AIDS. France will continue to be actively engaged with its European Union and international partners to establish a tax on financial transactions whose resources could be partially dedicated to international solidarity.

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But we must go further. We need to be more effective in prevention. We must find solutions that would enable us to more rapidly detect and treat the disease. I refer specifically to the people who exposure to prophylactics, early detection or self-diagnosis.

I want to say it clearly, educating HIV infection is no longer a Utopian dream. I hope France can make available its expertise to all countries, all communities in need, especially targeting areas where the epidemic is rampant, where financial constraints do not allow to apply the right solutions. It is here that we much concentrate our efforts.

Finally, the response against AIDS has long been implemented without the infected populations being at the heart of the reflection. The issues are technical, but we know our biggest challenge struggle today is to adapt our struggle against this disease and the people who suffer from it, French public authorities grant them an important role.

I emphasize this point. Networks of people living with HIV must be considered as the first actors in the response, as actors in preventions, actors in research and this is why France is supporting women who fight for recognition of their rights, particularly in the context of reproductive health.

Also together with patient's groups so that everyone can benefit from quality care and with all community

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organizations so as to address this culmination including based on sexual orientation or geographic origins.

The French experience shows that joint work between the government and the voluntary sectors saves lives daily; as such collaboration is fair and effective. These are the values of solidarity and justice that France wishes to bring in its response against HIV.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, the winners of this year's Red Ribbon Awards in the Prevention of Sexual Transmission category, exemplifies these values of solidarity and justice. Thank you. [Applause].

KEVIN MOODY: Thank you. Thank you very much. We'll now ask Monsieur Touraine to now hand out the awards in the category of Prevention of Sexual Transmission.

The first organizations is The Help, Myanmar. [Applause]. Thank you.

The next winner and the last for today is Foundation SEROvie from Haiti. Thank you. [Applause]. Thank you.

I will now ask a representative from this category of winners to say a few words.

MALE SPEAKER: Distinguished guest, your Royal Highness, civil society colleagues, on behalf of The Help Myanmar and the Foundation SEROvie Haiti, I would like to thank our communities. Without them we would not be here today

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receiving this invaluable award in the category of Prevention in Sexual Transmission. Congratulations to all of our fellow winners. We are proud to be here with you all from across the world receiving this award and sharing our experiences.

Thanks to the modern day advances and efforts of science in combination with economic assistance and available HIV treatments, people living with HIV and AIDS currently have a near normal life expectancy in many countries, yet in some countries, sexual minorities, LGBTQI individuals have received little attention despite their high prevalence of HIV and AIDS.

In Haiti, for example, according to the latest survey by Ministry of Health on the prevalence of HIV among sexual minorities, this year's prevalence appeared to be as high as 18.1-percent. Unfortunately in some countries, sexual minorities are severely stigmatized and resulting in high levels of verbal and sometimes physical violence. Many countries still have laws that drives stigma and sends people underground. This makes it difficult to access healthcare and other social services.

Today in order to take the necessary steps to break this chain of intolerance and reduce the prevalence of HIV and AIDS among sexual minorities, we must fight against double stigmatization.

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Homophobia is a serious problem that requires the help of everyone: family, friends, teachers, academics, doctors, media, opinion leaders, HIV and AIDS activists, UN Rights Association, donors and of course heads-of-states. We must say no to homophobia, no to exclusion based on sexual orientation and gender identity and say yes to tolerance. LGBTQI people are human beings and are also entitled to happiness and well-being. We must accept these rights.

Keep in mind, that prevention is always better than cure. Recognition such as the Red Ribbon Award will only serve to promote and build activism and for this, we are grateful. We encourage others to come on board to support community activism. Let's turn the tide together. Thank you.
[Applause].

KEVIN MOODY: Thank you. I've also been asked to acknowledge other leaders in the room; Sheila Tlou, for the regional director for Africa East and South and Jean Elie-Malkin, the regional director Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Thank you.

I think it's really appropriate that these leaders, all of them, are here today acknowledging the community leaders. I want to close by thanking the sponsors, the UNAIDS family, Global Fund and Irish Aid and to remind you to visit the community dialogue spaces in the Global Village. I want to

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thank especially our distinguished speakers here. Thank you.
Most important, for their commitment to excellence, I want to
congratulate one more time the Red Ribbon Award Winners for
2012. [Applause].

[END RECORDING]

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