



**Message by Juan Somavia  
Director-General of the International Labour Office  
on the occasion of  
World AIDS Day**

**1 December 2010**

Despite significant progress in stemming the pandemic, HIV still poses a significant obstacle to realizing the goals of sustainable development and decent work for all.

Its effects are highly concentrated amongst those of the most productive age. This human tragedy also hits families, enterprises, societies and economies.

This year's World AIDS Day is part of the two year campaign '*Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise – Universal Access and Human Rights*'. Concerned with all workers, wherever they work, the ILO is keeping the promise, promoting and protecting the human rights of workers living with or affected by HIV. Workplaces hold enormous potential to halt and begin to reverse the spread of the pandemic yet this potential is still to be fully tapped.

Prevention efforts are blocked by persistent stigma and discrimination against persons living with or affected by HIV. Discrimination based on HIV status often blocks access to jobs and for others it results in job losses. The fundamental rights and freedoms that are at the core of decent work, particularly equality of opportunity, treatment and social protection rights are violated on a daily basis in the context of HIV.

The ILO Recommendation concerning HIV and AIDS and the World of Work, 2010 (No. 200) adopted by representatives of governments, employers' and workers' organizations in June 2010 has strengthened the foundation for action to protect these rights.

Some 33.3 million persons worldwide are living with HIV today. With five million on treatment, some 10 million more still do not have access to the treatment they need. One in four AIDS related deaths is caused by tuberculosis, a preventable and curable disease. This is why Recommendation No. 200 addresses HIV and TB co-infection.

As a key avenue for the HIV response and for ensuring human rights, fundamental freedoms and gender equality, the world of work response must be integrated into national AIDS strategies and development plans – as called for by Recommendation No. 200. The global action plan which we are developing with ILO constituents will serve as a guide to giving effect to this Recommendation.

Today, we make a strong call for governments, employers' and workers' organizations, enterprises and all stakeholders, especially persons living with HIV, to make the workplace a key channel for scaling-up action against HIV.

Count on the ILO's full commitment.

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