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Desireealliance.org

To: International AIDS Society

The Desiree Alliance issues this statement in their decision not to attend the 2014 International AIDS Conference in Melbourne Australia. We feel the inadequate representation of sex workers and blatant disregard to assist the problematic policies of the United States regarding access to HIV health care has historically and largely served the interests of the International AIDS Society's agenda to ignore a global health crisis for those in sexual economies.

Although the IAC is based on the scientific and political interests of governments, big Pharma's and corporate investments, Desiree Alliance sees the humanitarian side of the IAC as felonious in operation. To disregard the humanness of what the IAS has built on the backs of those affected fails in its responsibility to secure well-being and righted access to AIDS healthcare for those who work in sexual commerce. This responsibility in which the IAS has never involved itself is in-and-of-itself the most irresponsible action of this multi-headed hydra of a conference.

Sponsorship from the IAS for U.S sex workers to attend the conference was nearly non-existent. Partially sponsoring scholarships for sex workers, who cannot attend without full funding yet fully sponsoring individuals/organizations that are allies to sex workers is insulting to sex worker rights groups that are sex worker-led. Sex worker-led rights groups have worked tirelessly against global criminalization of those affected by HIV and AIDS, yet we are never consulted in HIV and AIDS policy-making. Travel restrictions and bans by host-countries are something the IAS does not take into consideration or fight against for marginalized populations such as sex workers or drug user communities. It has also come to our attention that "Free childcare" is not "free" as the child must be responsible for a hefty registration fee in order to access this service. Therefore, as a leading U.S. sex worker rights group, the Desiree Alliance has chosen not to attend on the facts of these findings.

Excluding key communities ensures the continuing purpose of the IAC and assures these populations will be underserved and underrepresented in AIDS healthcare access. We urge the International AIDS Society to consider these important factors for the 2016 conference. The declaration "No One Left Behind" is lip service at best.

Sincerely,
Cristine Sardina, Co-Director
Desiree Alliance