

Sex Worker Freedom Festival

The Sex Worker Freedom Festival (SWFF) was an alternative International AIDS Conference 2012 event for sex workers and allies held in Kolkata in India from 21 to 26 July 2012.

SWFF was an official International AIDS Conference 2012 Hub. Supported by Open Society Foundation – Sexual Health and Rights Program, American Jewish World Service (AJWS), UNAIDS, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNFPA, HIVOS, AIDS Fonds and AIDS 2012 conference secretariat.

US government travel restrictions for sex workers meant that many sex workers were not able, or not willing to go to the IAC in Washington this year. The Sex Worker Freedom Festival was an alternative event for sex workers and our allies to protest our exclusion and ensure the voices of those excluded were heard in Washington.



Sex Worker Freedom Festival Press Launch – Kolkata July 2012

Despite working with a 9.5 hour time difference between Kolkata and Washington there was still video linking with conference sessions and Global Village activities in Washington.

Over 550 representatives of Sex Workers Collectives from across the world arrived for the first-ever Global Hub of the International AIDS Conference hosted and co-hosted by Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee, Global Network of Sex Workers (NSWP) and All India Network of Sex Workers (AINSW) respectively.

Andrew Hunter, NSWP President said, “with the US now leading the fight for Lesbian, Gay and Transgender equality we are extremely disappointed that they refuse to revise their restrictions on sex workers and refuse to recognise that we are human beings with basic rights.”

Ruth Morgan Thomas, the Global Coordinator of NSWP said, “it is essential that sex workers be able to self organise in order to stop the AIDS epidemic and yet again the US Government prohibits funds being given to sex worker-led

organisations, the most effective HIV prevention strategy, through the anti-prostitution pledge included in all USAID contracts.”

Michel Sidibé, UNAIDS Executive Director, in his **message to the IAC** Hub, described the Freedom Festival “a wonderful example of people who face stigma and discrimination speaking out and taking control” adding that a “major obstacle to reducing HIV is the fact that sex workers and people who use drugs are systematically discriminated against and criminalised... and there is NO evidence to suggest that such laws reduce demand for sex or (reduce) the number of sex workers.”

Sex Worker Freedom Rally



The festival focussed on seven freedoms that we are all entitled to:

- **FREEDOM to associate and unionise;**
- **FREEDOM to be protected by the law;**
- **FREEDOM from abuse and violence;**
- **FREEDOM from stigma and discrimination;**
- **FREEDOM to access quality health services;**
- **FREEDOM of movement and to migrate;**
- **FREEDOM to work and choose occupation.**



Delegates gather



Prasada Rao, UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for AIDS in the Asia-Pacific Region addresses SWFF



SWFF panel – Kolkata

Headlines from SWFF

There was a full programme of activities throughout the 6-day conference. A full conference report will be available in due course.

Here are a few of the highlights focussing on the 'seven freedoms'.

Freedom to associate and unionise

- **SWAPNA GAYEN** (DMSC, India) opened the session. She observed that people use different parts of their bodies to earn money and are allowed to form trade unions. Sex workers also use parts of their body but are not given the same right to organise.
- **XUE FEI FANG** (Angels with Broken Wings) highlighted the problem of getting funds for sex worker organisations since funders have delinked from China.
- **IRINA MASLOVA** (Silver Rose) followed on speaking about the aggressively repressive policies within Russia that are informed by an ever-expanding morality. This makes doing sex work extremely hard. Sex workers are barely acknowledged as a vulnerable group by the State. The State classifies people working with foreign-funded NGOs as spies and recent legislation restricts public demonstrations and internet activity.

- **THIERRY SCHAFFAUSER**, a trade unionist and sex worker from France, concluded the session by posing the question: why do sex workers need to join trade unions? Trade unions are about workers coming together to fight for rights and defending their working conditions. Trade unions are about work. So if sex work is defined as work, it fits the trade union paradigm. The key to unionising around sex work is to promote sex workers not as victims but as proud human beings.

Freedom to be protected by the law

- **ANNAH PICKERING** (NZPC) began the session by giving a fascinating presentation on the new legislation which has decriminalised sex work in New Zealand. Formed in 1987 to advocate for rights and welfare of sex workers, New Zealand Prostitutes Collectives spearheaded a campaign to decriminalise sex work which was won in 2003. Annah highlighted some of the concrete benefits of decriminalising sex work. These include being able to solicit for sex without fear of arrest, accessing justice in case of abuse, taking clients to court who default on payment, and reporting clients to the police if they refuse condoms, which results in a fine of 2000 dollars.

The NZ law seeks to protect under-18 year olds selling sex, and criminalises their clients. Further, it enables sex workers to institute protective measures in the workplace; to establish safety norms by issuing occupational health and safety guidelines. Despite decriminalisation, street-based workers still face stigma and discrimination by society. However, they at least have some avenues for retribution now.

Annah Pickering at SWFF



- **DAISY (WONETHA)** spoke of the very differing context of Uganda where sex work is illegal. Despite the law requiring proof of sex work activity in order to arrest, sex workers are arrested every day without such proof. Police officers steal their money and force them into unprotected sex. They have to buy bonds to get bail, though it is supposed to be free. The rape of a sex worker is not considered a crime, and many times police officers are the perpetrators. Incarcerated by the State, sex workers in jail are not allowed access to HIV medicines. A major problem for WONETHA, the sex worker organisation in Gulu, has been banning of health promotion workshops by the Ministry of Ethics, and the arrest of health workers. This suppression of information has grave implications for HIV prevention. The police interpret condom distribution as promoting and sustaining sex work. As a result condom distribution by and to sex workers has been banned.
- **ANNU SWAMY** (Kranti Mahila Sanstha, India) made the observation that with inflation, more police atrocities against sex workers are emerging. She gave examples of how police try to undermine the power of sex worker collectives.
- **SOTHARY PEN** (WNU) shared a comparable narrative from Cambodia. Here too, sex workers encounter gross human rights violations from society and police especially, and cannot access legal services. The Women's Network for Unity is a sex workers' network who established a Community Legal Service to help individuals access justice. It has educated over 2000 members in legal literacy in the past year, and dealt with fifty individual legal cases.
- **JAMIE TODD-GHER** (Amnesty International) highlighted the advocacy work that Amnesty is starting around legislative change.
- **A NUMBER OF SEX WORKERS** challenged Amnesty International's lack of a consistent political stance on decriminalisation of sex work and its conflation with trafficking.



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Freedom from abuse and violence

- **MEENA SESHU** (SANGRAM) opened the session by stating that sex workers experience a range of violence – physical, sexual, emotional and psychological. Invariably, it comes from both state and society. Less talked about is violence within the community. Connecting all is the violence of judgmental attitudes.
- **KAREN LOPEZ QUINTANO** (TDVTrans AC, Mexico) spoke about the many sources of violence encountered by sex work and transgender populations in Tamaulipas, Mexico, from violence organised by crime cartels to discrimination by family and other actors. A questionnaire conducted with 78 transgender sex workers found that 50 percent had been discriminated against. Many underwent mandatory HIV testing in government health care settings. Sex workers and transgender people in Tamaulipas have set up a citizen's watchdog to fight against stigma and discrimination.
- **PHELISTER ABDALLA** (KESWA, Kenya) highlighted the many perpetrators and the depth of violence faced by sex workers in Kenya. They are abused by religious leaders, landlords, police, city council workers and clients. Arrested sex workers are kept in jail without trial for a minimum of three days, during which time it is impossible to access ARVs. The murder of sex workers is common in Kenya.
- **RADMILLA VASILKOVIC** (Sloboda Prava, Serbia) spoke about the criminalisation of sex work under public peace and order laws in Serbia. Arrested sex workers are detained up to 30 days before trial. In most cases, judges sentence sex workers to imprisonment. As elsewhere, corruption and police brutality is made worse by the impunity that the Serbian police enjoy. Condoms are used as evidence to indict sex workers which directly impacts on their vulnerability to HIV.
- **JENNY BUTLER** (UNFPA) spoke about meaningful participation of sex workers in research and processes of decision making. She highlighted the consultation on VASW held in early 2012 in Montreux as a prime example of actively involving sex workers in discussions which are about them. She also spoke about the need to redefine 'evidence'. When UNFPA did a literature review they found out of 2000 studies only 10 contained sex worker-based evidence. One of the challenges, she said, is that non-peer reviewed research is not given any weight. There is a need for reports of sex workers'

lived experiences to be considered evidence. Recommendations by UNFPA are that VASW must be prevented and addressed through sex worker-led approaches; training for police must be sex worker-led; support services must be provided to sex workers; sex work must be considered work; VASW must be looked at just as violence against other workers is; UN commitment must be given to stop raids, rescue, unethical research and violence.

Freedom from stigma and discrimination

- **AKRAM PASHA ANWAR**, an HIV-positive MSM sex worker from India, opened the session by talking about the need to address internalised stigma first and foremost, when working with male and TG sex workers. Internal and external stigma severely thwarts their attempts to access spaces to meet and from entering the public health system.
- **PATIENCE NKOMO** (Zimbabwe Sex Workers Alliance) spoke in relation to policy, sex workers in Zimbabwe are charged with loitering for the purposes of prostitution, soliciting for sex work and blocking pavements. In society, sex workers face abuse from different corners, including verbal abuse and discrimination against their children. Recently, a parliamentary legislator in Zimbabwe was demoted because he came out in support of sex worker rights.
- **LOTUS** (Shanghai CSW & MSM Centre, China) explained that she was wearing dark glasses because, as many sex workers in China are, she is worried about her identity being revealed. She spoke about the repressive environment for transgender people in China. Because passports cannot be changed from male to female, they find it hard to get jobs. Landlords don't want to rent to transgender people and generally people, including policemen, do not help transgender people when they are in grave situations. Families do not easily accept their children as transgender.

- **MINERVA VALENZUELA** (Slut Walk, Mexico) gave a fascinating presentation about a shelter for elderly sex workers established in Mexico City called 'The House of the Beautiful Flowers'. This opened in 2006 and currently gives shelter to ten women. Residents are given food and shelter, provided by donations. The women are permitted to continue working in sex work or otherwise, if they want to, they are offered educational opportunities.
- **JULIAN HOWS** (GNP+) concluded the plenary with a presentation which highlighted the importance of quantified evidence in sex work research. He presented the *People Living with HIV Stigma Index* developed by GNP+. Developed for and by people living with HIV, the index supports the GIPA (Greater Involvement of People living with HIV and AIDS) principle by being driven by PLHIV and their networks. By acting on this principle the Index empowers individuals and communities most affected by the epidemic. It aims to increase the evidence base for policy and programmes to reduce HIV-related stigma.

Freedom to access quality health services

- **KAYTHI WIN** (TOP, Myanmar) in a key note address, presented the rationale and approach of setting up a sexual and reproductive health service (SRH) for sex workers in Myanmar. STI prevalence amongst sex workers is high in Myanmar and very few sex worker-friendly clinics existed. In 2005 TOP started their new SRH programme. The approach was peer-focused and peer-driven using friendship and community building as key strategies. TOP's clinical services include Cervical Cancer Screening and Testing; in Myanmar every 1 in 50 women have cervical cancer.
- **YAM BAHADUR RANA**, presented Blue Diamond Society's treatment programme and health care for male and transgender sex workers in Nepal. He raised several key issues; the problematic approach of targeting MSM/TGs in HIV prevention; the care and support of MSM and TG populations and their families needs to be integrated; the paucity of research on positive TGs and MSM in the region.



- **LIANA ANDRIYANI** (OPSI, Indonesia) presented on OPSI's positive prevention team collaboration. Currently in Indonesia, the highest level of sexual transmission is amongst heterosexuals (46 percent).
- **MIGUEL ANGEL ROMERO SAURIN**, secretary of the Civil Partnership of Action in Lima, spoke on the importance of quality service and comprehensive care for sexually marginalised communities in Peru, urging that comprehensive care must include providing services that address reproductive health, TB, HIV and Mental Health. Quality service is essential for transgender females, who need to receive correct information about hormonal treatment to minimise self-harm. A major problem for the female transgender community is not having national identity cards, which means they cannot access healthcare.
- **JENNY BUTLER** (UNFPA) concluded the session by raising critical questions to UN agencies regarding their delayed, and often misguided, response to sex workers' health needs. Why is family planning not considered something that sex workers need? Why is post-abortion care not taken into consideration in health programming targeting sex workers? Why do sex workers

still get arrested for carrying condoms, when it is a known fact that condoms are the most sensible measure? Jenny ended by drawing out some areas UN agencies need to unequivocally prioritise while considering sex workers i.e. that sex work is work, programming with clients, building a model of removing demand for unprotected paid sex, addressing stigma and discrimination in health service providers and applying occupational health standards, to ensure that the health of all workers is protected.

Freedom of movement and to migrate

- **SACHUMI MAYOE and LIZ HILTON** (Empower, Thailand) opened the session by sharing a poem about the various constructs which are attached to women who cross borders from Burma to Thailand, such as travelling equals 'trafficked' and that travellers are 'victims'. Sachumi then spoke about the last decade of abuse that sex workers in Thailand have been subjected to under anti-trafficking measures. Much of this has been framed as research, where sex workers are judged as wrong from the moment they are encountered, and where sex work is understood only through the

trafficking paradigm. Anti-traffickers take it upon themselves to judge what exploitation is, she said. In 2011, Empower initiated its own research called "Hit and Run" which has tried to counter some of these falsities by asking sex workers their views on trafficking.

- **ANDREW HUNTER** pointed out a major inconsistency within the UN system regarding positions on trafficking. While the Secretary General Ban Ki Moon calls for decriminalisation of sex work, the UNITE campaign on violence against women, calls for more nations to take up the Swedish model.
- **DOMINIQUE** (Young Women's Empowerment Project, USA) spoke next live via Skype from the sex workers networking zone in Washington, on young women involved in the sex trade in Chicago. She argued that there is an imaginary line between childhood and adulthood. This causes young women to be excluded from sex work debates. In a groundbreaking study conducted by YWEP entitled "Bad Encounter Line", the violence experienced by young women on the streets of Chicago was tracked. It found that institutional violence was greatest; from police, educational systems, foster systems, social services and shelters. Dominique pointed out the difficulties that policies defining under-18's as victims of trafficking create in working with these girls. The majority do not feel they have been trafficked and yet many are being forced into psychiatric treatment when they come into contact with health units as sex workers. YWEP are designing training programmes based on these findings which will help organisations to navigate how to work with young people in the sex trade.
- **JESSICA YEE** (Native Youth Sexual Health Network, USA) pointed out that people are very uncomfortable with youth and sex work despite its reality. "The 18 age limit denies young people their choices over their bodies", she said.



- **PAT ABRAHAM** (ASWA, Nigeria) concluded the session by presenting a different view. She shared that the sex work community in Nigeria do not approve of, or acknowledge, young girls in sex work.

Freedom to work and choose occupation

- **JOHN MATHENGE** (HOYMAS, Kenya) opened the session with a key note address on why sex work should be respected as an occupation and included in the labour rights framework. African sex workers face routine sexual exploitation by their employers and are denied the right to privacy. Despite challenging the constitution on this, Kenyan sex workers face continual raids in their homes and workplaces.
- **MEENAKSHI KAMBLE**, a female sex worker in the VAMP collective (India) spoke about how in India, sex workers face daily harassment by the police and are labelled as criminals.
- **ALEJANDRA GIL**, Aproase, Mexico emphasised that many people practice sex work with the conviction that it is a better means of economic sustainability for themselves and their families. The stance that people do sex work because they have no alternative reinforces the victim stereotype and empowers the anti-trafficking lobby.
- **MAMA CASH** are one of the few donors who take a stand that sex work is work within the donor community. Annie Hiller from Mama Cash gave a presentation about the Red Umbrella Fund. This is a unique resource for sex worker-led organisations involving AJWS and Comic Relief, and sex work activists. 7 out of 11 of the International Steering Committee are sex workers.
- **LEONOR ANGKIS LAY** of Scarlet Timor Collective, concluded the plenary via a live link. She explained the organisation's advocacy work on social, cultural and economic empowerment of sex workers towards developing anti-discrimination legislation in Timor-Leste.



Andrew Hunter (NSWP President)

Plenary session on Working with the UN

- **JENNY BUTLER** (UNFPA) and **RUTH MORGAN THOMAS** (NSWP) presented the 2012 updated UNAIDS Guidance Note on HIV and Sex Work with Annexes. The Advisory Group included equal numbers of sex workers nominated by NSWP as representatives of the UNAIDS Co-Sponsors and the Secretariat, plus independent experts from academia and civil society organisations. The Annexes make a number of recommendations for action which will help shape programmes and policies on HIV and sex work that are human rights-based, in the following areas:
- **THE LEGAL AND POLICY ENVIRONMENT AND THE RIGHTS OF SEX WORKERS.** This section outlines the laws, law enforcement, policies and practices that impede effective HIV responses for sex workers, and the measures required to create enabling legal environments.
- **SHIFTING THE STRATEGIC FOCUS FROM REDUCTION OF DEMAND FOR SEX WORK TO REDUCTION OF DEMAND FOR UNPROTECTED PAID SEX.** This section outlines policy and programme approaches to reduce the HIV risk and vulnerability of

sex workers and their clients through reducing the demand for unprotected paid sex.

- **DIFFERENTIATING SEX WORK AND TRAFFICKING.** This section clearly articulates the difference between sex work and human trafficking, and considers the potential implication of anti-trafficking interventions for sex workers' HIV vulnerability.
- **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF SEX WORKERS.** This section explores the components of economic empowerment and financial security as an essential part of the response to reduce sex workers' HIV vulnerability.
- **ANTONIO GERBASE** (WHO) and **ANDREW HUNTER** (APNSW) presented on guidelines that are under development on prevention and treatment of HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Infections for Sex Workers in Low and Middle-income Countries. The guidelines will provide recommendations on what constitutes effective HIV programming in the context of sex work. They recommend a comprehensive package of interventions for the prevention and treatment of HIV and other STI for sex workers.

Andrew highlighted the significance of these guidelines including the values and preferences of sex workers. For example, many sex workers in low-income countries have



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experienced forced STI treatment even when an STI is not present, and these guidelines will redefine the use of interventions such as Periodic Presumptive Treatment and unethical practices because they take into account sex workers' views and experiences.

- **ANNETTE VERSTER** (WHO) and **JUDE BYRNE** (International Network of People who Use Drugs) gave a presentation of the global guidelines on viral hepatitis among people who inject drugs. This document outlines a comprehensive package of interventions to reduce the risk of exposure to HIV and viral hepatitis. The document, written in consultation with drug users, has received high level endorsement by other international bodies such as the Economic and Social Council.
- **THE DELEGATES** highlighted the relative lack of specific actions taken within the UN system to date on the needs of transgender sex workers. In programming data this community is often subsumed within the MSM category which means their particular needs remain unaddressed. NSWP is currently developing advocacy tools for TG communities.

Plenary session on Achieving Financial Security

- **RITA ROY** (USHA Cooperative, India) outlined the background of the USHA Cooperative, a financial institution for sex workers, set up in 1995 in West Bengal by thirteen sex workers. At that time sex workers faced immense social barriers; they could not open bank accounts, because they didn't have any identification. They had to resort to unofficial and exploitative money lenders. With 17,000 members today, USHA offers a higher rate of interest for savings and lower interest rates for borrowing.
- **SANYU HAJJARA BATTE** (Lady Mermaids Bureau, Uganda) spoke about the myriad problems that sex workers in Uganda encounter in achieving financial security. They are exploited by landlords and police and need a lot of money to overcome prejudice. They are unable to get loans and insurance, often having to spend their savings to access STI treatment. Female sex workers are also usually cut out of family inheritance.
- **KIN SAN** (TOP, Myanmar) explained TOP's financial savings scheme for sex workers. This

provides funds for sex workers who are arrested and face financial constraints with housing and education.

- **ABIOLA MCCALMON** (Guyana Sex Work Coalition) spoke about the effects of criminalisation in Guyana on financial security. Many Guyanese sex workers migrate to neighbouring Barbados only to find themselves in worse off situations on arrival.
- **GER STEENBERGEN** (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands) highlighted the issue of enabling sex workers to gain more control. He highlighted several measures which organisations can take to circumvent donor exploitation. For example; not depending on one donor but having several donors, who contribute smaller amounts; by engaging with local donors rather than those situated abroad; by ensuring that donors do more than just give money but use their influence at a higher policy level. Ger stated that in his view, decriminalising sex work would automatically reduce financial exploitation.

You can see much more coverage of SWFF on video on the [APNSW YouTube channel](#) and footage of the event will be made available on the [NSWP website](#).

How SWFF was reported in the media

SWFF garnered truly global coverage during the period of the conference. The launch and the reasons for the conference were covered extensively in the [Guardian \(UK\)](#), [Human Rights and HIV/AIDS](#), [Occuworld](#), [UNAIDS](#), [Trustlaw](#) (photoblog), [NY Daily News](#) and the [Huffington Post](#) amongst many other publications.

A number of journalists were filing regular stories direct from Kolkata, including the Guardian's Claire Provost who provided a number of in-depth articles including this [photo-coverage](#) of the thousands of sex workers who marched through the city.

Claire's reporting also featured commentary on the [Anti-Prostitution Pledge](#) as well as the comments of [Prasada Rao](#), the UN secretary general's new special envoy for Aids in the Asia-Pacific region, who credited India's sex workers with pioneering some of the most successful HIV prevention programmes.

'Democracy Now!' also featured live video interviews from the conference, including Annah Pickering and Meena Seshu in [this interview](#) about SWFF.

Activism too in Washington DC

Sex workers, including many from North America, WERE present in Washington and sex worker activism was alive and well and

made its presence felt there too, as evidenced in this [PJ Starr photo gallery](#).

Sex Worker activists memorably disrupted a [special session on the US Congress and HIV](#).

Here are some key highlights on video (courtesy of Kaiser Family Foundation) from the sessions and speeches held in Washington.

- [A Call to Action: Global Sex Workers Recommend Policy Change for Better HIV Prevention and Treatment](#)
- Cheryl Overs' plenary speech (from 20 minutes in): ['The Tide Cannot Be Turned Without Us: HIV Epidemics Amongst Key Affected Populations'](#)
- And this full joint session featuring speakers from both Kolkata and Washington, [The Oldest Profession: Is Sex Work, Work?](#)



Other news headlines

France

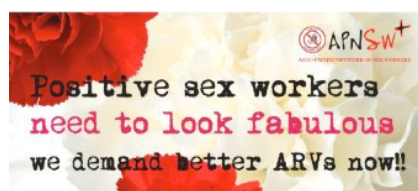
- **French sex workers demonstrate against criminalisation of clients**
- **French intellectuals pour scorn over plans to criminalise prostitution**

Africa

- Sehin Teferra, an Ethiopian feminist activist who is researching violence against sex workers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia writes in **Open Democracy** and questions the simplistic dichotomies within western feminism on the nature of sex work and finds many women withstanding the 'occupational hazard' of rampant violence.
- Violence against sex workers is again covered in these articles from **IOL News** and **News24** in South Africa which cover the recent report by Sex Workers' Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT.) The report, based on interviews with over 300 sex workers mostly in Cape Town, found that around 70% of sex workers have been abused by the police.
- **International Condemnation of WONETHA arrests**
International concern regarding the safety of staff from the Ugandan sex worker organisation, Women's Organization Network for Human Rights Advocacy (**WONETHA**). This follows a police raid on their drop-in centre in May when five of WONETHA's members were charged with "living on the earnings of prostitution".

Global

- Launch of APNSW+ and NSWP+ **Sex workers living with HIV set out their demands for equitable treatment**



Publications

Three new publications relating to sex work have been released by the Open Society Foundations.

- **LAWS AND POLICIES AFFECTING SEX WORK**
This reference brief aims to clarify terms and illustrate examples of alternatives to the use of criminal law as a response to sex work. Laws and policies on sex work should be based on the best available evidence about what works to protect health and rights. They should optimise sex workers' ability to realise the right to due process under the law, the right to privacy, the right to form associations, the right to be free of discrimination, abuse, and violence, and the right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work.
- **TEN REASONS TO DECRIMINALIZE SEX WORK**
This document provides ten reasons why decriminalising sex work is the best policy for promoting health and human rights for sex workers, their families, and communities. Removing criminal prosecution of sex work goes hand-in-hand with recognising sex work as work and protecting the rights of sex workers through workplace health and safety standards. Decriminalising sex work means sex workers are more likely to live without stigma, social exclusion, and fear of violence.
- **CRIMINALIZING CONDOMS**
How Policing Practices Put Sex Workers and HIV Services at Risk in Kenya, Namibia, Russia, South Africa, the United States, and Zimbabwe.

Global Commission on HIV and the Law

- NSWP welcomes the launch of the **REPORT OF THE GLOBAL COMMISSION ON HIV AND THE LAW** and its recommendations regarding the decriminalisation of sex work, including sex workers, our clients, our families, and our businesses and managers.

The recommendations are explicit in their opposition to the criminalisation of commercial sex. The recommendations are also clear in calling for countries to repeal laws prohibiting activities associated with sex work including, brothel keeping. States are told to take all measures to stop police violence and harassment, and to prevent other human rights abuses such as mandatory HIV and STI testing. The Commission makes an important distinction between sex work and forced labour, and condemns anti-trafficking practices and legislation which violate sex workers' human rights, such as forced rehabilitation, detention centres and the U.S. PEPFAR programme's anti-prostitution pledge.

While the recommendations call for the decriminalisation of sex work and go some way to recognising sex work as labour, NSWP believes there is need for further deliberation and detail in a number of areas to ensure sex workers rights are fully protected.

Global Network of Sex Work Projects

- **MAKING SEX WORK SAFE**
'A Practical Guide for Programme Managers, Policy-Makers and Field Workers'
Making Sex Work Safe is a handbook, originally written by Cheryl Overs and Paulo Longo in 1996 and now updated, which presents some of the knowledge and experience gained by projects involved in responding to the health and safety needs of sex workers. This important resource is now also available in **Chinese**, **Spanish** and **Russian** on the NSWP website.
- **NSWP BRIEFING PAPERS**
NSWP regularly produces Briefing Papers on a range of topics. Topics covered so far include PEPFAR and Sex Work; The Criminalisation of Clients; Sex Work is Not Trafficking & New Prevention Technologies and their implications for Sex Workers. These are also now available in **French**, **Spanish**, **Russian** and **Chinese**.