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## Christian Conference of Asia's Statement on World AIDS Day – 2024

As we approach the critical milestone of ending AIDS by 2030, we are reminded of the importance of taking a rights-based approach to the epidemic. World AIDS Day 2024 presents an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to human dignity and justice for those living with HIV. This year's theme, 'Take the Rights Path,' calls on us to prioritise the rights and voices of the most vulnerable, empowering communities to lead the charge in ending this epidemic. By ensuring no one is left behind, we can realise the goal of eradicating AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) recognises the importance of upholding the rights and dignity of persons living with and affected by HIV. At the heart of CCA's mission is the belief that life is a precious gift from God, and any threat to that life, particularly through stigma and discrimination, must be addressed. By taking the rights path, we affirm that protecting human dignity is fundamental to ending AIDS. Communities are central to all CCA initiatives; without their involvement, our efforts would be in vain.

On World AIDS Day 2024, which coincides with the Asian Regional Consultation on 'Towards Enhancing Social Protection Measures for HIV Affected Children and Teens in Asia', CCA places particular emphasis on the rights of children and teens living with or affected by HIV. It is critical that these young people are able to live dignified lives in society, with their rights upheld. Gaps in the realisation of human rights, particularly for children and teens, continue to hinder our progress towards ending AIDS. Threats to these rights not only undermine the health of these individuals but also jeopardise the broader gains in the fight against the epidemic.

While global concerns have declined, the rise in new HIV cases in Asia remains alarming. Churches and Christian communities must step up to provide an effective response to the HIV epidemic in the region. Many children and teens are denied access to essential services due to a lack of age-appropriate programmes and support. We must ensure that the next generation is empowered to become effective members of society.

CCA calls on its member councils and churches to strengthen initiatives, responses, and services for the benefit of future generations. A child is a precious gift in the eyes of God, and the kingdom of God belongs to them. Human dignity and rights are equal for all generations, and it is our responsibility to create an environment that supports and nurtures children and teens.

We are stronger together, and we must continue to sustain and accelerate our efforts to address HIV. Upholding the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights and promoting the inclusion of all communities are essential not only for ending AIDS but also for ensuring sustainable development and human security. As we follow the rights path, it is crucial to abolish laws that infringe upon people's rights and enact policies that safeguard the rights of every individual.

Let us stand united in solidarity, creating safe spaces for children and teens, and making vital services accessible through our advocacy and campaigns. Taking the rights path means being the change we wish to see. Together, we must uphold our values to create a safer, more inclusive world—especially for children living with HIV and teens affected by it.

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