

Executive Director

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The Honourable John Kerry
Chairman
Foreign Relations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
USA

29 November 2012

Dear Chairman Kerry,

Thank you for your continued leadership in the global AIDS response, and for embracing an approach to HIV that is informed by evidence and respect for the dignity and human rights of all people. I take this opportunity to write in relation to the current discussion in the United States Senate regarding the possible accession by the United States to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities..

People with disabilities can be at heightened risk of HIV infection because of their limited access to appropriate prevention information and methods and their vulnerability to sexual abuse. Access to HIV treatment, care and support for people with disabilities is also often hindered by lack of information about disability among HIV services providers, stigma and prejudice towards people with disabilities, as well as the physical inaccessibility and inappropriateness of HIV services for those with disabilities. Similarly, people living with HIV may develop impairments as the disease progresses.

As you know, in the United States there is strong protection for those with disabilities as well as those living with HIV through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We often cite in UNAIDS the ADA as a model of legal protection for people living with HIV.

Acceding to the Disability Convention would strengthen this protection, reinforce the global leadership of the United States vis-à-vis the challenges of HIV and disability, underscore its determination to strengthen the legal protection for people living with HIV at home and abroad. The United States will also be better placed to share with other nations its wealth of experience in disability rights gained through the implementation of the ADA.

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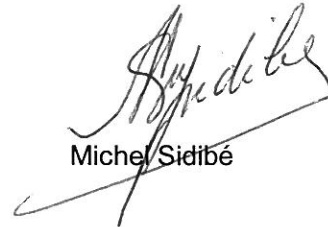
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UNAIDS is confident that members of the United States Senate will continue to show leadership in the global AIDS response by supporting the Disability Convention as a critical and powerful symbol of their engagement for a world free of HIV and discrimination.

Yours sincerely,



Michel Sidibé