

Remarks by Midnight Poonkasetwattana, APCOM Executive Director
via Zoom for

**PEPFAR COP/ROP 2022 Virtual Opening Plenary
Monday, February 28, 2022 (19:00-20:00 ICT)**

Civil Society Perspective – Asia Region

Sawasdee krup everyone from Bangkok, Thailand. I hope you're safe and well.

APCOM is on the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating board as an NGO delegate representing Asia and the Pacific, thus, I would like to thank Angeli, PEPFAR and OGAC for this opportunity to provide remarks from the Asia Region. What an honour to be part of the opening with Secretary Blinken, Peter Sands and Winnie Byanyima - and what an honour to be here with you all at this time.

PEPFAR is well known for its decision making based on evidence - and data that is compiled in partnership with other USG, partner governments, multilaterals, the private sector, and most importantly the civil society to create real impact to the lives of the vulnerable populations.

In the Asia Region, PEPFAR covers 13 countries - and we have seen tremendous progress in the HIV response over the years – however, the gap that we still need to close is around ensuring increased investment in key populations-led interventions for controlling the HIV epidemic and sustaining the HIV impact. Gaps in stigma and discrimination and human rights of the key populations must also be addressed - for our region the key populations are - gay men and other men who have sex with men, transgender persons, sex workers, people who inject drugs, and prisoners - we need to ensure the young key populations are not missed out as well.

COP/ROP22 guidance, and the OU specific Planning Level Letters are amazing, but is there funding for it? We need to see budgets that aligns with the reality:

- Key Populations represent a majority of the HIV infections globally at 62%
- In Asia Pacific, 98% of all new HIV cases occurs among key populations and their sexual partners

Thus, PEPFAR and OGAC must not let the key populations down when this is the time to:

1 - Invest in key population CSOs as providers for comprehensive services -- for education, prevention, treatment dispensing and initiation in community-led spaces.



We need dramatic PrEP expansion and scale up. We need to build upon social enterprise and social contracting models like in Thailand and Vietnam for sustainability.

2 - Invest in core community capacity development and structural interventions, including building regional key population networks as technical assistance providers. Key Population Investment Fund and other regional support for these must be maintained and expanded. And lastly,

3 - Invest in the sustainability of key population-led responses. PEPFAR must keep at its heart key populations and people living with HIV communities and differentiated community responses. Sustainability doesn't just mean funding government clinics but it means investing in sustainability in the most at-risk communities; the use of technology - particularly during the pandemic has transformed key-population led service delivery and key population-led innovations must continue to be supported.

The Global AIDS Strategy estimated that the Asia Pacific region requires 32% of the Global resources to be on target, and I hope that PEPFAR will use the stated data so that the key populations will not be left behind.

Thank you very much, kob khun krub.

ENDS

