



## **“Position Statement”**

RANAA is the Regional/Arab Network Against AIDS which encompasses national networks of the civil society organizations on HIV as well as associations and support groups of People Living with HIV (PLHIV) in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

Whereas the estimated number of people living with HIV in the MENA region reached 570,000 persons according to the report of the UNAIDS of 2012,

Whereas the MENA region, a vital part of the world, had been classified as one of the top regions in the world with the fastest growing HIV epidemic, doubled AIDS related mortality rate and concentration of HIV amongst specific demographic groups, as well as lowest rate of access to ARVs

Whereas stigma and discrimination often hinder effective response to HIV, hamper the work to limit the prevalence of HIV and prevent people living with HIV from enjoying the human rights guaranteed by all religious laws and human rights systems such as the right to support, treatment and care...

In this context, we express our concern about the growing number of People Living with HIV in our region while the incidence rate is going down in other regions of the world.

We note that this increase is taking place amidst: weak treatment coverage, high stigma and discrimination rate affecting People Living with HIV and most vulnerable groups, including even associations operating in the field of HIV; hence threatening the future of development in this region by affecting its most precious asset which is human capacity, in particular affecting the freedom of movement and employment and the freedom to travel for People Living with HIV and

exposing us to a disaster that we can stave off now through exerting strenuous efforts at the local, regional and international levels.

**Based on the foregoing, we confirm the following positions:**

***With regard to keeping HIV/AIDS as a priority within the post 2015 Development agenda,*** RANAA will exert pressure over the governments in the MENA Region to give special priority to HIV/AIDS including the adoption of a comprehensive multi-sectorial approach in fighting the epidemic covering the health, economic, social, political and legal aspects and others, and will work accordingly in its forthcoming strategy.

We, hereby, confirm the importance of maintaining the HIV and AIDS as an independent chapter in the framework of post 2015 development goals instead of limiting it to the health dimension only.

***With regard to limiting stigma and discrimination,*** RANAA will coordinate and help develop efforts to implement effective programs for the MENA region in order to limit the stigma and discrimination, as an essential step to limit the occurrence of new cases and find a legal framework at the national level guaranteeing the rights of the People Living with HIV and the most vulnerable populations to care, treatment, support and social integration, thereby fostering the governments' enforcement of the international human rights related treaties and declarations, and ensuring greater involvement of the People Living with HIV in the sustainable development process.

**Based thereon, we call out to:**

- The governments in the region and legislative authorities to foresee the imminent danger threatening the future of development in the region and to play their role in facing the negative implications of the prevalence of the HIV infection through the needed legislations and services,
- The concerned international and regional bodies to consider the specificity of this region and the dire need to increase financial and scientific support to help face the growing prevalence of HIV in the region, in turn threatening and undermining all development efforts in the region and in the whole world.

**Amman, Jordan July 2013**