A new and diverse Global Coalition on Women and AIDS (GCWA)

Since 2004, the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS (GCWA) has been a dynamic alliance of diverse stakeholders partnering to promote gender equality, health and rights for all women and girls. Nearly a decade later, commemorating International Women's Day, the GCWA was re-launched with renewed commitment to strongly position the issues of women in all their diversity and AIDS in the current sustainable development discourse. The re-launch took place on March 9 2013 in New York as world leaders, women's rights advocates and members of United Nations family convened at the 57th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), to agree on actions to accelerate “the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls”. The GCWA re-launch came as a much needed reminder that in a time of fiscal retraction and increased politicization of the women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, women and girls desperately need platforms such as the GCWA to spearhead partnership, advocacy, shared learning and positive change. As emphasized by the new Advisory Group, the GCWA will build the value of respect of women in all their diversity and stand strong with women, including women living with HIV, young women, sex workers, transgender communities, women who use drugs, women who are care givers, migrant women, women with disabilities, living in conflict and post conflict, , while recognizing men as important partners for achieving gender equality.

The reinvigorated GCWA signals an expansion of partnerships, redefined priorities and new vision. The members of the GCWA helped make it successful by informing the GCWA on key issues grounded in country realities, and guiding the development of its new Operational Charter. Following this, the new Advisory Group of the GCWA came together on 23-24 May 2013, to discuss and chart the way forward for the GCWA. To capture the different realities faced by women, the members of the Advisory Group reflect the following constituencies: women living with HIV; young women; care givers; sexual and reproductive health and rights; transgender women; women who use drugs; women who engage in sex work; and men and boys dedicated to gender equality.

Throughout the meeting, members identified diversity as a core strength of the Advisory Group, which allows for the work of the GCWA be informed by a broad array of realities. As such, the Advisory Group called upon the GCWA to continue efforts to connect diverse communities and build solidarity to promote health, rights and gender equality for all women and girls worldwide. During the rich discussions, the Advisory Group also highlighted the unique role of the GCWA as a bridge between diverse communities and the United Nations, calling to “keep things real”, making sure that all the GCWA does is accessible and relevant for the lives of women and girls in all of their diversity.

GCWA membership is open to all international or civil society organizations committed to gender equality and the principles of the GCWA. To join the GCWA or learn more please follow this link: http://www.womenandaids.net/about-gcwa/join-the-coalition/how-to-join.aspx.