



## News Release

### For Immediate Release

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

### **NEW UNITED STATES IMMIGRATION PROCEDURES UNPRODUCTIVE AND DISCRIMINATORY AGAINST PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV**

**(Amsterdam/Washington, D.C.) - The Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GNP+) and its partner organization, the Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS – North America (GNP+NA), are disappointed that the Government of the United States has not been able to resolve the change in policy regarding entry restrictions for people living with HIV.**

Despite the US President signing into effect in July 2008 a bill repealing the immigration laws barring people living with HIV and assurances that the Department of Homeland Security would introduce improved (“streamlined”) regulations regarding short-term visas for HIV-positive visitors, USCIS regulations for people living with HIV to enter the US seem to have become more complicated.

GNP+ and GNP+NA are specifically concerned by the immigration procedure as described by the US National AIDS Housing Coalition (NAHC) and the Canadian Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN) in their letters to US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. These organizations received notice from the US embassy in Ottawa, Canada, that as of June 1, 2009, Canadians living with HIV wishing to enter the US have to go through a visa application procedure including a face to face interview, where they have to declare they are HIV asymptomatic, have received counseling on how to prevent HIV transmission, and agree to practice safe sex, amongst other things.

GNP+ on several occasions has offered its assistance to the Government of the United States to discuss and work on a resolution to the existing travel restrictions, but has never been taken up on its offer.

GNP+ congratulated the United States last year on its move to decriminalize the entry of people living with HIV into the country, and supported the notion that the procedures around travel and entry of people living with HIV needs to change.

GNP+ has been working together with the US Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) on the 2009 HIV/AIDS Implementers' Meeting, which is taking place in Namibia from June 10 to June 14. One of the criteria for countries hosting this meeting is that they must not have travel restrictions for people living with HIV. GNP+ and OGAC in a joint effort successfully urged the Namibian government to revise an outdated travel restriction law. GNP+ has in turn expressed hope that the US government would itself address their own travel restrictions.

GNP+ and GNP+NA urge the government of the United States to deliver on their commitment to lift travel restrictions for people living with HIV and bring their USCIS regulations in line with other countries that allow the free travel of people living with HIV.

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**For more information about this news release:** Please contact GNP+NA (Ted Gaudet, Regional Coordinator GNP+ NA by phone +1-506-453 2644) or GNP+ (Martin Stolk, Communications officer, by email [mstolk@gnpplus.net](mailto:mstolk@gnpplus.net), or phone +31-20-423 4114)

**The Global Network of People living with HIV (GNP+)** is a global network for and by people living with HIV. GNP+ advocates to improve the quality of life of people living with HIV. The central theme for the work of GNP+ is Reclaiming Our Lives! GNP+ programs are organized under four platforms of action: Empowerment; HIV Prevention; Human Rights; and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. For more information, please visit [www.gnpplus.net](http://www.gnpplus.net).

**The Global Network of People living with HIV/AIDS – North America (GNP+NA)** is a North American affiliate of GNP+, GNP+NA operates a unique bilateral organization providing North American PLWHA's with opportunities to network, organize, and become part of a global movement of PLWHA's. The mission of GNP+NA is to improve the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS by creating and sustaining an active North American network of PLWHA's working regionally to address the global pandemic.