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By *moderator*

Created 2010/06/04 - 10:24am

4 June, 2010 - 10:24 ? moderator

Leading South African AIDS organisations are today jointly condemning FIFA and the Local Organising Committee for blocking access to the distribution of condoms, and to HIV prevention and health related information within FIFA controlled stadia and Fan Fests during the forthcoming FIFA World Cup.

The Department of Health has confirmed that there are at present more than 71 million condoms currently in distribution, more than 65 million are available for further distribution.

To date FIFA has not permitted any civil society organisation to distribute HIV or health related information and FIFA has not provided any written confirmation that condoms may be distributed at stadia and within the fan fests. This is despite the fact commercial sponsors selling alcohol will have dedicated spaces available within these areas.

The AIDS organisations endorsing this statement believe that FIFA has a moral obligation to partner with local organisations who have been negotiating through the SANAC Sports and Entertainment Sector with the LOC and FIFA in order to protect both citizens and visitors alike from HIV infection, TB and the H1N1 virus.

The NGOs listed below have requested an urgent meeting with FIFA and the LOC to respond to their concerns but this request has not been granted. As a result, we hereby call on FIFA and the Local Organising Committee to answer publicly the following key questions regarding the upcoming FIFA World Cup.

- Is there approval for condom and health information distribution at all stadia, fan parks and public viewing areas by the DOH and SANAC?
- Does this approval extend to all of SANAC's civil society affiliates who are part of the SANAC Sports and Entertainment Sector?
- Is there going to be promotion of condoms and HIV testing, endorsed by FIFA and the LOC, during the world cup ? in order to take advantage of millions of people who will be watching the football? How will this be done?
- Is there easy access to information about HIV/AIDS for fans, such as contact details for the AIDS Helpline?

South Africa faces a huge challenge in preventing HIV. It is central to our future as a country. Our Government is leading our national response by calling for up to 15 million people to test for HIV in the next year. This campaign is endorsed by the United Nations AIDS Programme (UNAIDS). The World Cup is an opportunity to take forward this campaign and to combine sport with messages about HIV prevention and healthy living that can be heard by millions. It would be a tragedy to miss it.

Issued by:
AIDS Consortium, Community Media Trust, Johns Hopkins Health and Education in South Africa (Brothers for Life), National Religious Association for Social Development, SA HIV Clinicians Society, Section 27, Sonke Gender Justice

Network (Sonke), Soul City, Treatment Action Campaign.

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Source URL (retrieved on 2018/08/20 - 6:33am): <http://www.tac.org.za/community/node/2878>