Dear Advocate,

The International AIDS Conference is coming to Washington, D.C., in July and we have one message for participants and organizers: We cannot build an AIDS-free generation without women. CHANGE is working with our partners and colleagues to make it clear that we cannot make sustainable progress against HIV without women at the center of our efforts. We plan to extend our work beyond the conference and leverage an expanded and energized network for long-term advocacy.

We’re also keeping a close watch on what’s happening here in the United States. At the end of the day, women’s health and rights don’t pay attention to international borders. Whatever goes on in the United States affects what’s happening overseas, and vice versa. That’s why in preparation for AIDS 2012, we’ll be bringing in some of our leadership training alumni, who represent women from all over the world, including the United States, to complete a media and communications training, and connecting them with media during the conference. Women will shape their own stories at AIDS 2012.

We’ve accomplished so much to this point with your help. We’ll be calling on you again during the conference, and we’d like to ask for your help now in supporting the voices of women who can influence the conversation. Please consider supporting CHANGE’s efforts at AIDS 2012—your gift will help us to put women at the heart of the discussions that have critical consequences for their health.

Many thanks as always.

In solidarity,

Serra Sippel
President, Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)

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Prevention Now!: Party With Protection for an AIDS-free Generation

Like treatment, prevention for women is critical to creating an AIDS-free generation. CHANGE marked International Women’s Day and National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day with a party for woman-centered prevention, complete with a DJ and a prevention-filled piñata. With our sights on AIDS 2012 in July, we co-hosted nearly 100 people at Busboys and Poets here in Washington, where we screened Choosing Prevention, a documentary by Martha Dodge about female condoms in Malawi. Sabrina Heard, an alumni of our leadership training for women living with HIV, and health educators from local community service provider The Women’s Collective added to the fun by performing "The Female Genitalia Show," an educational skit focused on prevention for women. Universal Access to Female Condoms also had guests help create a paper doll chain in support of female condoms, to reach its ultimate goal—to call attention to female condoms at AIDS 2012, by having the world’s longest continuous paper doll chain.
The party was co-sponsored by local, national and global partners: DC Community Coalition for AIDS 2012, the 30 for 30 Campaign, The Women’s Collective, National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, National Female Condom Coalition, Universal Access to Female Condoms (UAFC) Joint Programme, PATH and UNAIDS.

**Letter to President Obama: Human Rights and HIV**

HIV thrives on human rights violations—it spreads where social injustice creates vulnerability. For that reason, interventions that just focus on identifying and treating the disease are only part of the solution. This will be a critical message at AIDS 2012. Human rights have to be part of the world’s response to the HIV pandemic.

CHANGE joined with the 30 for 30 Campaign and sent a letter endorsed by more than 65 organizations to the Obama administration asking that the president give a keynote speech at AIDS 2012 focusing on human rights and HIV prevention. The letter asked that he address, among other things, women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV-based stigma and discrimination, ending HIV criminalization, and increasing funding and support for female condoms.

**What’s New**

CHANGE is very happy to welcome three new board members, all of whom expand the breadth and depth of our capacity.

Musimbi Kanyoro is the President and CEO of the Global Fund for Women and has been a passionate advocate for the health, development and human rights of women, girls and minority groups throughout her life. Prior to the Global Fund, Musimbi led the Population and Reproductive Health Program at the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, where she advanced support to women’s movements and girl’s education. She also served 10 years as General Secretary of World YWCA, the largest membership organization in the world, reaching 25 million women and girls in 3,000 communities around the globe.

Aziza Ahmed is assistant professor of law at Northeastern University. She teaches reproductive and sexual health and rights, international health law, and property. Her research areas lie at the intersection of health and law, human rights, feminist theory, critical race theory, and critical legal theory. She has a law degree from the University of California Berkeley, a master’s degree in population and international health from the Harvard School of Public Health, and a bachelor’s degree from Emory University. Prior to joining the Northeastern faculty, Professor Ahmed was a research associate at the Harvard School of Public Health Program on International Health and Human Rights.

Beth Tritter is a managing director at The Glover Park Group and specializes in government relations and strategic communications. While at The Glover Park Group, Tritter has focused primarily on clients with an interest in U.S. foreign policy. Tritter joined GPG after nearly a decade on Capitol Hill, serving most recently as Legislative Director for Congresswoman Nita Lowey of New York, chairwoman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations. Tritter received Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees from the University of Pennsylvania in Modern Middle Eastern Studies, and studied at the American University in Cairo, Egypt.

**Washington Update**

**The Budget**

President Obama presented his Fiscal Year 2013 budget to Congress in February. Despite very tight finances this year, the President’s budget would increase funding for international reproductive health programs by $33 million to a total of $643 million. Thirty-nine million of this amount is requested for the UN Population Fund, an increase of $4 million over last year. If approved, this funding would help restore some of the money cut by congressional opponents of contraception over the last two years. This proposed increase is solid evidence that the Obama administration strongly supports women’s access to family planning and reproductive health overseas since many other components of the budget face deep cuts.

However, after strong increases in funding over the last decade, this year the President’s budget requests a cut of $546 million for the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). It does propose an increase for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to keep on target to meet the administration’s three-year commitment of $4 billion by 2013. The decrease in PEPFAR funding is problematic given the administration’s recognition that we can end AIDS, and growing support for integration of HIV and family planning and maternal health services.

**Capitol Hill**

The Congress remains highly partisan in the run-up to the presidential and congressional elections in November and women’s health and rights remain at the center of many of the debates. In February, the Senate defeated an amendment offered by Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO) that would have vastly expanded conscience exemptions to the president’s new health
care program. The amendment would have allowed all employers—not just religious organizations—to opt out of contraception coverage and any other kind of health coverage if it cited moral objections. Similar attacks on women’s health and rights are likely in the coming months.

The “Gold Moment on Family Planning”

The Government of Great Britain and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have announced that there will be a major international event focused on family planning on International Population Day, July 11, 2012. The Gold Moment on Family Planning—which will take place in London just before the opening of the Olympics—will focus attention, policy, and funding on meeting the global unmet need for family planning. It is currently estimated that 215 million women would like to be using modern forms of contraception, but do not have access to them. The Gold Moment is designed to set a course to close this gap in unmet need by 2020. CHANGE took the lead in sending a letter which was signed by 30 organizations urging the State Department to join the global effort to extend access to family planning to all women and to encourage Sec. Clinton to personally participate in the event.

CHANGE in the Media

Voice of America: "Female Condoms, Family Planning, and HIV Prevention"
Huffington Post: "An Affordable HIV Intervention: Because Women Are Worth It"

Support CHANGE

As we prepare for AIDS 2012, we hope you will consider supporting CHANGE with a financial contribution. Any way you choose to contribute, your support strengthens our efforts to promote the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls worldwide through U.S. foreign policies and programs. For federal employees, CHANGE is part of the Combined Federal Campaign, #62113.