



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FRIDAY, 26 MAY 2017

Statement on the SALRC report on sex work

NACOSA notes the release of the South African Law Reform Commission report on Project 107 dealing with Adult Prostitution. We are concerned about the impact that the continued criminalisation of sex work will have on the lives of sex workers, particularly as it relates to high and increasing rates of HIV, AIDS and TB in this vulnerable population.

NACOSA reaches over 50,000 sex workers per quarter with a human-rights based packaged of services to save the lives of sex workers through access to health and related services. In our experience of working with this vulnerable group, they face chronic levels of violence from both police and clients which is linked directly to their criminalised status. They simply have no access to justice. In practice, the criminalisation of sex work victimises only sex workers while allowing their clients to escape prosecution for violence and harassment.

While seen as criminals, sex workers are stigmatised and discriminated against which prevents them from accessing the services they are entitled to as enshrined in our constitution.

Public health research has shown that criminalisation of sex work has a direct link to the transmission of HIV and TB in the country and we are not likely to solve the very high disease burden in South Africa unless we address this critical issue.

NACOSA believes that the Nordic Model, as mentioned in the Commission's report, is not a viable solution to the challenges facing sex workers and the HIV and TB epidemics in South Africa. It will continue to stigmatise sex workers and will not increase access to health and other services. Criminalising the act of buying sex could lead to increased violence against sex workers by driving transactions further underground. By taking part in a criminal transaction, the sex worker is still, in practice, criminalised and would continue to be unable to access to justice.

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Notes to editors:

- [NACOSA](http://www.nacosa.org.za) is a network of over 1,500 civil society organisations working to turn the tide on HIV, AIDS and TB. NACOSA promotes dialogue, builds capacity with accredited training, mentoring and technical assistance and channels resources to support service delivery on the ground. As a network, NACOSAS represents a substantial community of learning which draws on the latest, best practice experience from the field. NACOSA's programming works to reduce the impact of HIV, AIDS, TB and other socio-economic conditions and contribute to the global strategy to bring about the end of AIDS by 2030. In line with the National Strategic Plan and UNAIDS' 90-90-90 Fast Track targets, NACOSA focuses on young women and girls, sex workers, those most affected by gender-based violence, children and youth, and other vulnerable and key populations. For more information visit www.nacosa.org.za
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