**Discrimination increases vulnerability to HIV**

For the first time ever the United Nations Human Rights Council held a panel on the HIV epidemic. There have been some milestones made in addressing the epidemic, with the number of HIV related deaths dropping globally. According to UNAIDS, about 15 million people living with HIV are now accessing medicine. However, stigma and discrimination hinder the advances in the global response to HIV.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay addressing the panel said HIV has taught us a lot about how the neglect of human rights increases vulnerability. “The lack of respect for human rights has not only fuelled the epidemic,” she said, “it has brought to the surface pernicious and persistent forms of discrimination and marginalization, in multiple and overlapping manifestations.”

2 April 2012