

Asijiki

The Coalition to Decriminalise sex work in South Africa

February 2015

Values Statement

During a national stakeholders meeting on 22-23 October 2014, delegates resolved that a coalition for the decriminalisation of sex work should be formalised. This document sets out the values and principles of such a Coalition.

Context

All aspects of sex work are currently a crime in South Africa. The criminalisation of sex work negatively impacts of sex workers by making them vulnerable to violence and making it difficult to access health and justice services whilst denying sex workers labour rights that all other employees are entitled to under labour law. The South African government has initiated the South African Law Reform Commission to investigate, research and make recommendations on whether the law on sex work should be changed, and if so, how.

Decriminalisation of sex work means that the buying and selling of sex will no longer be a crime. It will bring sex work within a human rights framework, where occupational health and safety laws as well as South Africa's protective labour framework will apply. Sex workers will also be more able and willing to claim their human rights to equality, privacy and freedom from violence under decriminalisation.

The Way Forward

The decriminalisation of sex work is the model of law reform that respects human rights and is based on public health evidence. Following international evidence and best practice, decriminalisation will have the following effects on sex workers and South African society:

- Reduce the levels of gender based violence;
- Reduce the prevalence of HIV and other STIs;
- Create safer places for sex workers to work;
- Create safer societies; and
- Respect sex worker agency and choice of occupation.

The organisations and individuals who make up the Decriminalisation Coalition
endeavour to work together to:

- Increase pressure on government to change the law on sex work by decriminalising sex work.
- Raise awareness of the need for the decriminalisation of sex work from a human rights and public health perspective and lobby institutions, lawmakers and communities to support decriminalisation.
- Challenge harmful stereotypes of sex workers that keep stigma alive and facilitate acts of unfair discrimination against sex workers.
- Build the capacity of sex workers to advocate for the decriminalisation of sex work themselves.
- Raise sex workers awareness of their legal rights and remedies available when their legal rights are violated; and
- Challenge and speak out about human rights violations that sex workers experience.

I hereby ascribe to the values and principles set out in the Values Statement and wish
to formally join the Asijiki Decrim Coalition.

Signed by: _____

Signature _____

Date: _____

Email: _____

Tel: _____

I am signing this on behalf of (please tick appropriate):

_____ myself

_____ my organisation named _____

(fill in organisation name)