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## **Women's Network for Unity Protests Drug Trial Recruitment Tactics**

The Women's Network for Unity, a network organized by and for Cambodian sex workers is concerned about the manner in which recruitment for the University of California San Francisco and University of New South Wales Tenofovir drug trial is being conducted.

WNU has received reports from its members that some unethical recruiting practices have been taking place and must be stopped.

A number of sex workers have reported that when they were approached by recruiters, they refused to provide the name of the drug and would say only that it is good for the sex workers and has no side effects.

"Today is a day of advocacy for drug testing organised by WNU" says WNU member Keo Tha "We held the first press conference on March 29<sup>th</sup> to protest that it is sex workers in Cambodia who must risk their health and income by participating in the trial." "When participants may some day suffer from the side effects of this drug, who will take care of them? We will not accept the pain and suffering that could come from this test just because some people tell us only that this drug is good"

"Today we still protest this issue but also that some people involved in the drug trial are pressuring sex workers to participate and giving them wrong information. These recruiters tell our sisters that this drug will protect them from HIV infection and they can spend \$3 a month on fruit and paracetamol to stop some of the drug side effects. If they are so sure this drug is safe why don't they send their own sisters and daughters to test it? They have a lot more money than sex workers and have protection if the drug makes them sick. Also if it was their sisters and daughters they would be a lot more honest about the risks and side effects."

Sex workers have reported that some people involved in recruitment have misrepresented the nature of the Tenofovir trial. Some sex workers have been told that the drug will prevent HIV and are not being clear and honest that the drug is experimental and its effectiveness for HIV prevention and long-term side effects is not known.

WNU wants recruitment process to be better and more honest, with sex workers not pressured or given wrong information about the drug. WNU continues to call for sex workers to be better informed about the risks and question why the experiments need to take place on Cambodian sex workers at all and for health insurance to be given to all sex workers who participate in the experiment.

**For interviews or more information please call WNU Secretariat: Keo Tha - 012 471 093 Sou Sotheavy – 011 660 152**