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The ILO Global HIV Discrimination in the World of Work survey

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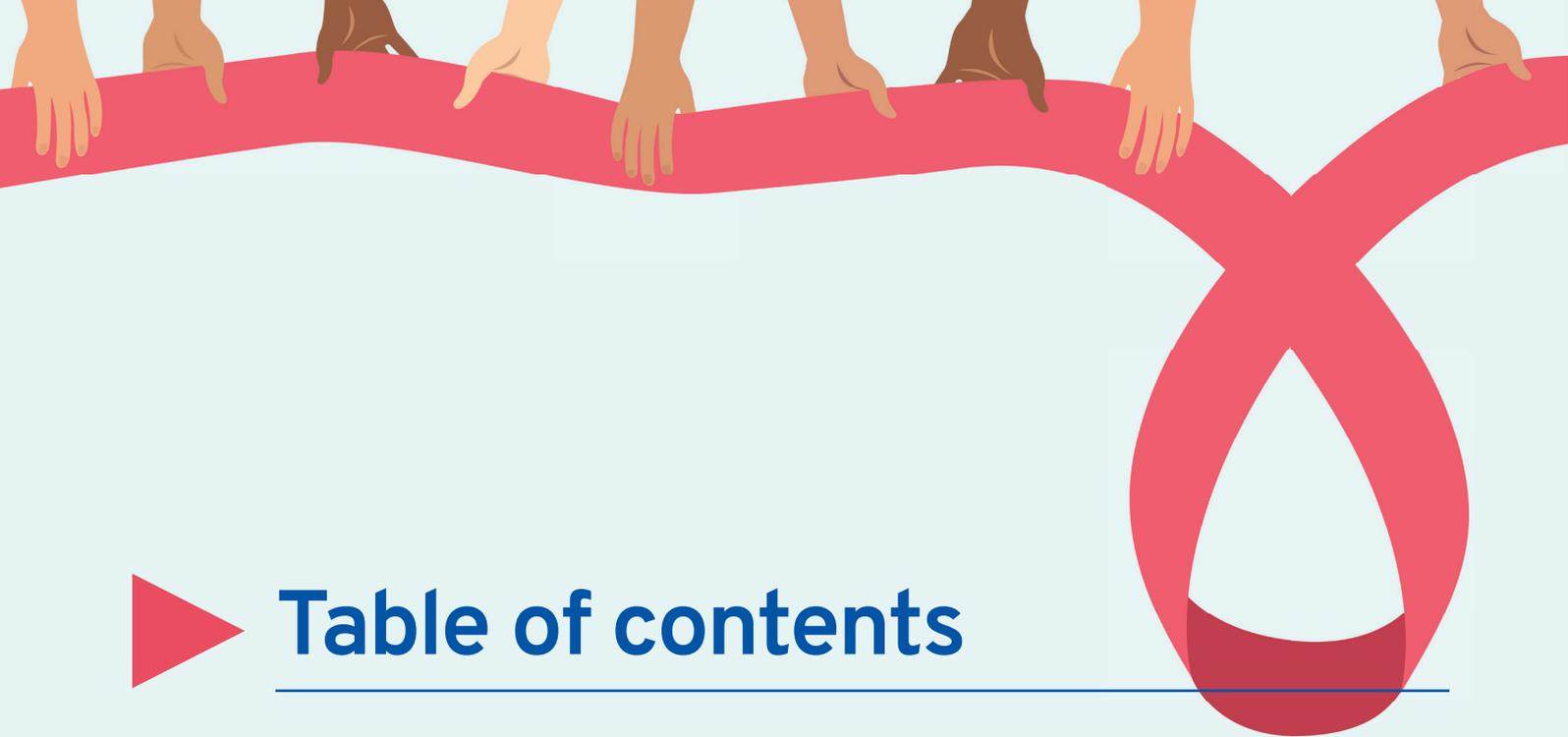
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Preface

Stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV persist everywhere, including in the workplace, despite the significant progress made over the last decade in the enrolment of people living with HIV on antiretroviral therapy and the decline in new HIV infections. Clearly, this is a major obstacle to ending AIDS by 2030, a promise made by Member States when adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Therefore, understanding the reasons why HIV-related stigma and discrimination persist 40 years into the AIDS epidemic is essential and urgent, also with the COVID-19 pandemic threatening to reverse the gains made thus far.

For this reason, the ILO has joined forces with Gallup to carry out a groundbreaking global survey covering 50 countries that sheds further light on the causes of the persistence of HIV-related stigma and discrimination in the world of work. The survey provides an empirical basis for better-informed action by governments and employers' and workers' organizations to promote a non-discriminatory, healthy and safe working environment.

It is our hope and belief that this report will generate much-needed momentum and help accelerate action to eliminate work-related HIV stigma and discrimination.

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Director-General

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Geneva, Switzerland



▶ Executive summary

The ILO HIV and AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200) prohibits discrimination in the world of work on the grounds of real or perceived HIV status. However, 40 years after the emergence of the HIV and AIDS epidemic, HIV-related stigma and discrimination persist, including in the workplace, and remain roadblocks to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. Generally, stigma and discrimination deny people living with, affected by or at risk of HIV access to HIV prevention, treatment and care services. In the workplace, discriminatory practices by employers, co-workers, clients and customers further exacerbate their difficulties in finding or keeping a job. As a result, people living with HIV often find themselves working in the informal economy.

To obtain a better understanding of the reasons behind the persistence of HIV-related stigma and discrimination in the workplace, the ILO joined forces with Gallup to conduct the ILO Global HIV Discrimination in the World of Work survey. The survey has generated consistent and comparable cross-sectional data on HIV-related stigma and discrimination in the workplace in 50 countries from different regions and with different HIV burdens.

Interviewers spoke with 55,902 people: 26,307 women and 29,595 men. The countries were selected from the list of UNAIDS Fast-Track countries, Gallup's countries of focus

for its World Poll in 2020, and The Global Fund's Focused, Core and High Impact countries. Multiple countries were selected from each region (see page 7 for a list of the regions and countries covered by the survey).

The survey was carried out through a two-stage approach:

- Stage one involved the careful and systematic development and testing of a cross-country survey questionnaire on HIV-related discrimination in the world of work.
- Stage two entailed the implementation of the survey in 50 countries through probability-based sampling to collect nationally representative data for all the surveyed countries. The appendix of this report contains further details about the survey's approach and methodology.



► Summary of key findings

- **Across all 50 countries, about four in ten respondents say people living with HIV should not be allowed to work directly with others who do not have HIV (35.6 per cent) or offer a conditional response of “it depends” (2.8 per cent).** Slightly over half of respondents (50.5 per cent) say people living with HIV should be allowed to work directly with people without HIV. There was no significant difference between the views expressed by women and men.
- **However, views differ considerably by region. The Middle East and North Africa as well as Asia and the Pacific are the two regions with the lowest percentage of respondents who say people living with HIV should be allowed to work directly with others who do not have HIV.** 40.6 per cent of respondents in Asia and the Pacific and 42.0 per cent in Middle East and North Africa say people living with HIV should be allowed to work directly with people who do not have HIV. In the five other regions, most respondents say people living with HIV should be allowed to work directly with others who do not have HIV. Those regions include Eastern Europe and Central Asia (62.9 per cent), Western and Central Africa (71.1 per cent), Latin America and the Caribbean (75.4 per cent), Western and Central Europe and North America (81.8 per cent), and Eastern and Southern Africa (89.9 per cent).
- **In general, the regions with the highest percentage of respondents who agree to people living with HIV working directly with people who do not have HIV are the same regions in which respondents are more likely to know a person with HIV. This suggests an important link between the personal acquaintance of people living with HIV and positive attitudes towards them working directly with people who do not have HIV.** In Eastern and Southern Africa, 89.9 per cent of respondents say people living with HIV should be allowed to work directly with others who do not have HIV.
- **Educational attainment is one of the most powerful predictors of positive attitudes to people living with HIV working in direct contact with people who do not have HIV.** Overall, 68.0 per cent of those with a tertiary education (16 or more years of education) say people living with HIV should be allowed to work in direct contact with others who do not have HIV, compared with 55.4 per cent of those with a secondary education (nine to 15 years of education) and 39.9 per cent of those with a primary education (zero to eight years of education). Even in the Middle East and North Africa, and Asia and the Pacific a majority of individuals with a tertiary education say people living with HIV should be allowed to work directly with others who do not have HIV.
- **People with a better understanding of how HIV is transmitted are generally more likely to agree that people living with HIV should be allowed to work directly with others who do not have HIV.** The survey asked respondents if, to the best of their knowledge, HIV could be transmitted in any of the following ways: through unprotected sex, through hugging or shaking hands, by sharing needles, through kissing, or by sharing a bathroom. Among individuals who answered all of the questions correctly, 77.5 per cent say people living with HIV should work directly with others who do not have HIV. This figure falls to 63.6 per cent among respondents who answered one of the questions incorrectly, and the percentage drops to less than one third (32.1 per cent) among those who answered two or more questions incorrectly. A similar pattern is observed when comparing viewpoints of women and men – the higher the level of knowledge of how HIV is transmitted, the higher the percentages of both women and men who say people living with HIV should be allowed to work directly with others who do not have HIV.

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