

## **Sisonke Sex Worker Movement**

**In October 2003 SWEAT hosted the second National Sex Worker Meeting. This meeting was held in Worcester and approximately seventy sex workers from across South Africa participated in the meeting. The meeting concluded with the launch of the National Sisonke Sex Worker Movement of South Africa. The name Sisonke means “togetherness”.**

**Delegates at the meeting felt that there was no national grouping where sex workers could be united and have strength in numbers. Sex workers decided that they should take responsibility for bringing about change and that it was time they stood up for their rights. So they decided to start a movement where sex workers take charge. The movement came up with the following guiding statements with regard to their purpose:**

- **Uniting to change laws with regard to sex work**
- **Challenging the existing laws on sex work**
- **Exercising our human rights**
- **Sex work should be recognised as work**
- **All sex workers are welcome to be part of the movement regardless of area of work, race or sexual orientation**

At the next Sisonke meeting in May 2004, seven elected Sisonke representatives got together and discussed the purpose of the movement and the guiding principles. They came up with the following mission statement for the Sisonke sex worker movement:

### *Sisonke Mission statement*

*As Sisonke our aim is to unite sex workers, to improve our living and working conditions and to fight for equal access to rights.*

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