



UGANDA AIDS COMMISSION UNDER OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

PRESS RELEASE

Ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030: Uganda to hold a National HIV and AIDS Symposium from 8-10 November 2022

KAMPALA, 18 October 2022— Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC) is organising a National HIV and AIDS Symposium from the 8th to 10th November 2022 at Makerere University Business School Playground. The theme for the Symposium is **Ending Inequalities among adolescent girls, young women and boys.**

Speaking at the National HIV and AIDS Symposium launch press conference held at the Uganda Media Centre, the Director General, UAC said “One of our core mandates as is to coordinate the Multi-Sectoral HIV Response in the Country. For this we needed to bring together different stakeholders in a Symposium to evaluate our performance as a country and develop priorities for the next year in line with the National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan.”

We have made progress in the fight against HIV and AIDS as a Country. Recently released data shows a reduction in HIV prevalence from 18% in the 80’s to 5.5%. There has been a reduction in AIDS related deaths from 22,000 in 2020 to 17,000 deaths in 2021. Stigma and Discrimination has also reduced greatly however there is still work to be done.

According to the People living with HIV stigma index study done in 2019, 36.4 % reported that it was difficult to disclose HIV status to other people. 32 % revealed that they hid their HIV status from others. 68.8% of women living with HIV had disclosed to their children than to other family members. The most persistent form of stigma was awareness of family and non-family member who made discriminatory remarks and gossiped about the PLHIV at 34%.

Additionally, there is an increasing number of new HIV Infections among young people specifically Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) “Last year, 54,000 people got infected with HIV, of these 15,000 were adolescent girls and young women (15-24) and 5000 infections were from their male counterparts of the same age group. The root cause of most of these

infections is inequalities at different levels. That is why the theme for this year's Symposium is very timely" said Jotham Mubangizi , the UNAIDS Uganda Strategic Information Advisor.

The National HIV and AIDS symposium this year will feature a series of activities namely: The Annual Joint AIDS Review, Scientific Conference, Philly Lutaaya Lecture, Partnership Forum, HIV Financing Dialogue and Exhibitions. Uganda AIDS Commission has partnered with Vision Group to execute this Symposium.

"We have taken this activity from the boardroom to the open spaces where we can have more implementers participating not only as presenters but also as exhibitors. In addition, we have opened the space for communities to participate especially young people by setting up a Philly Lutaaya corner that will be dedicated to dissemination of HIV prevention messages through music and art" said Dr Musoba

The media has played and still plays a critical role in disseminating information which is key in HIV prevention. This information helps people make informed decisions and facilitates behaviour change.

"As Vision Group, we are happy to partner with Uganda AIDS Commission to ensure we contribute to the goal of ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030 by disseminating accurate information about HIV prevention through our different platforms" said Don Wanyama CEO Vision Group

Much as there is political commitment to fight HIV and AIDS, funding for HIV and AIDS still remains a challenge since most of the support comes from Donors. The Parliament of Uganda is mandated to appropriate the necessary budgets including the one for fighting HIV and AIDS in the Country.

Speaking on behalf of the parliamentary committee on HIV and related matters, the Chairperson of the committee Hon. Sarah Kayagi Netalisire promised that parliament will continue advocating for more domestic resource allocation to fight HIV and AIDS. "As parliament, we shall continue not only advocate for increased funding for the response, but provide the necessary leadership needed to ensure that Uganda meets the target of ending AIDS by 2030." She concluded.

Ends

About Uganda AIDS Commission

The Government of Uganda established Uganda AIDS Commission in March 1992 by an Act of Parliament 208 to coordinate the national HIV multi-sectoral response and hence is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the **Three Ones** principles in the coordination of the national response: One national AIDS coordinating Authority, One Action Plan and one Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The UAC Act situates the Commission to the presidency (office of the President). It is therefore expected to derive its overall policy direction and guidance

from H.E the President or his delegated entity/authority. Operationally the president entrusts policy oversight functions to the Commission/Board making UAC an autonomous institution.

The Uganda AIDS Commission Act requires the commission to oversee, plan and coordinate HIV prevention and control activities in the Country but in particular, to :

- Formulate policy and establish program priorities for the control of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and management of its consequences throughout the Country,
- Ensure proper planning and coordination of all HIV/AIDS control policies and programs within the overall program strategy,
- Identify obstacles to the implementation of HIV/AIDS control policies and programs and ensure the implementation and attainment of program activities and targets,
- Mobilise, expedite and monitor resources for the HIV/AIDS control program and activities,
- Disseminate information on the AIDS epidemic and its consequences on the program activities for its control,
- Supervise all activities relating to the control of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Uganda
- Perform such other functions relating to the prevention or control of the HIV/AIDS epidemic as the commission may deem necessary.

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