

**July 2024**

**AFRICAN NETWORKS OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV SEEK RESOURCE COMMITMENTS IN THE FIGHT TO END HIV**

**We are Grateful**

We as African People Living and Affected with HIV do appreciate efforts put by our governments in the struggle to advance gains in HIV response. We are pleased to note that our governments continue to play a very crucial role in the fight to end this pandemic. We also are realistic to acknowledge that our governments are resource constrained, hence find it difficult to juggle between citizens' health and meeting other essential public needs. The effort to take responsibility for addressing the HIV burden through increasing domestic resources, contributing to the Global baskets such as the Global Fund for AIDS TB and Malaria (GFATM), and in developing all-inclusive sustainable roadmaps for addressing HIV in our countries is highly acknowledged and appreciated. We more so appreciate all African governments who have taken steps to widen access of HIV services to most impacted and last mile populations, and decriminalize Key Populations (KPs) by ensuring their inclusion in national strategies. All efforts to widening and deepening inclusion and access to HIV services contributes significantly towards enhancing HIV gains.

**Thanks to German and European Community for this Great Solidarity in the Fight to End AIDS**

As the Community of African People Living with HIV, we appreciate the support received from Germany, the European Union and the Global Community in helping to strengthen intergenerational lifesaving systems for People Living with HIV in our countries. Through this support, transmission of HIV from mothers to their children is on the verge of being eliminated. Moreover, this support has allowed children born with HIV to grow to adulthood and have children of their own. In the past, HIV was a death sentence unlike now where people can enjoy their full lives, thanks to the amazing global solidarity.

We commend the Government of Germany for the commitment to continue supporting the global fight to end the HIV pandemic as declared by the German Chancellor in his speech at the opening ceremony of the International AIDS Conference on 22nd July 2024 in Munich. The European community and the international community too, have provided great support in the struggle to end the pandemic over the years. Resourcing the Global Fund, World Health Organization (WHO), multilateral institutions for health and other direct support to vulnerable countries have led to the current gains in the fight to end HIV and successfully address other emerging pandemics as well. We as the Community of the African People Living and Affected by HIV are deeply grateful.

**Thanks to the US Government and the PEPFAR Initiative**

We would also like to commend the US government and the American people for instituting PEPFAR, one powerful program that has contributed to transforming the global HIV epidemic landscape. PEPFAR as an international assistance program has been successful in transforming power dynamics between recipient countries and donors. It has enabled the two to sit together at one table and discuss how programs should look in the recipient country. In essence, from this model we see peers who are collaborating to a shared end, and not a powerful donor on one hand dictating to a helpless recipient on the other. The African community of People Living and Affected with HIV recognize and deeply value this partnership and mutual respect.

## **Our Concerns**

We are however extremely concerned that:

- Overall funding commitments from the international community in support of the global fight to end the HIV pandemic is waning as years go by. Unfortunately, this is the time when more resources are required to reach the goal of ending the HIV and AIDS epidemic. We request for increased resource allocations in order to ensure that all gaps in this fight are addressed.
- The US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)'s upcoming five-year reauthorization hangs in the balance. However, we appreciate the considerations that resulted in the successful one-year reauthorization that happened in March 2024. In the past, the five yearly cycle of PEPFAR reauthorization renewal historically received bipartisan support. These renewals had the advantage of allowing efficiency in national HIV programs, providing their stability over time, and enabling gains in epidemic control to be sustained. Currently, however, the five-year PEPFAR reauthorization cycle is under threat, with the danger that it will not only limit the ability of national programs to plan, but also, in time, risk the erosion of Congressional support.
- Some of our governments have chosen to criminalize communities who are deeply impacted by HIV. There is evidence that in these governments impacted populations face threats of rights violations including being jailed. Criminalization and other forms of rights violations against the most impacted populations not only affects quality of services but also leads to heightened stigma, missed appointments, treatment disruptions and reversal of gains made in HIV response.

## **Great Outcomes from PEPFAR and International Community Support to End AIDS**

International community support has strengthened procurement power within our African countries, that, in turn, has scaled up treatment and prevention in great magnitudes. This support has been instrumental to reducing major gaps in human resources in Africa and strengthened community health systems overall. Over the years, it has helped reduce rights violations and address structural barriers facing the most HIV-impacted people when accessing health services through various programs including Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe (DREAMS), Key Population Investment Fund (KPIF) and Community Led Monitoring (CLM). This international support has also contributed to strengthening countries' supply chain systems and quality of service delivery and ensured that treatment and prevention reach to the last mile.

The International Community's overall contribution accomplishments to date are well documented and staggering. They go beyond health and well-being with immense economic and development impact. For example, international health assistance contributions are attributed to a 42.4% increase in the share of girls and 43.1% increase in the share of boys in schools, and to a per capita GDP growth of 2.1% and more in recipient countries.<sup>1</sup> This is in addition to the profound lifesaving benefits that are not only limited to HIV/AIDS. Data shows that overall, the recipient countries have a 20% lower all cause mortality, have a 35% reduction in child mortality and 25% reduction in maternal mortality, all these amazing outcomes have been made possible through the power of global solidarity<sup>2</sup>.

### **Our Humble Asks**

- The international Community provides resources to match the need identified in the global investment cases to end the HIV pandemic. This is in acknowledgement that withholding this support would leave major and fundamental gaps in the struggle to end this epidemic. We implore Germany, the European Community and the International community to allocate more resources to ensure that we address all gaps in this fight.
- We implore both parties of the USA Congress to a 5-year PEPFAR clean reauthorization as an essential way to ensure that the current ambitious global targets to reduce the burden of HIV/AIDS by 2030 are achieved. The lack of a 5-year reauthorization for PEPFAR would signal a retreat of American leadership and would be felt as a great loss not only in Africa but globally. We implore the US Congress and Senate to direct their efforts to move forward with reauthorization and recommit to the greatest global public health success story of the last half a century.
- We acknowledge and appreciate the efforts from most of our respective governments in the fight against HIV/AIDS. We strongly urge our governments to further increase domestic funding for strengthening the local sustainability of the response, address the 10-10-10 gaps by ensuring total elimination of structural barriers and rights violations against people that are most impacted by HIV. Also work towards strengthening both facility and community health systems so as to not only achieve a sustainable HIV response but also to ensure that the current gains in country HIV response become better each passing day.

### **Conclusion**

More resources are needed to ensure that the gains achieved up to date are sustained. Ongoing investment by African Governments, Germany, the European community, PEPFAR and the international community will also continue strengthening fragile health systems, making them resilient and able to sustain the response not only to HIV and AIDS but also for other likely and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0289909>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.kff.org/global-health-policy/issue-brief/assessing-pepfars-impact-analysis-of-economic-and-educational-spillover-effects-in-pepfar-countries/>

emerging pandemics. By doing so, we can achieve a sustainable HIV response, emerging pandemics and ensure that the gains achieved so far are not reversed.

## **Signed**

1. Malawi Network of People Living with HIV (MANET+)
2. National Council of People Living with HIV in Tanzania (NACOPHA)
3. Zimbabwe National Networks of People Living with HIV (ZNNP+)
4. Coalition of Women Living with HIV in Malawi (COWLHA)
5. Zambia Network of People Living with HIV
6. Treatment Advocacy and Literacy Campaign Zambia (TALC)
7. Network of Journalists Living with HIV in Malawi (JONEHA)
8. National Association of Young people living with HIV in Malawi
9. Tonata PLHIV Network in Namibia
10. Rwanda Network of People Living with HIV(RRP+)
11. Tanzania Network of People Living with HIV (TNW+)
12. Liberia Network of people living with HIV (LibNept)
13. Key Population Consortium of Kenya [KPCK]
14. Key Population Consortia Transnational Collaboration (KP-TNC)
15. International Community of Women Living with HIV in Eastern Africa (ICWEA)
16. Young People Living with HIV in Tanzania (NYP+)
17. The Organization of Young People Living with HIV in Kenya (Y+ Kenya)