

PRESS STATEMENT

WORLD AIDS DAY CALL TO ACTION FROM UGANDAN WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV

The International Community of women living with HIV ICW Eastern Africa and other non-partisan AIDS and health organizations call on all political parties to endorse election pledge on AIDS treatment and prevention today as we commemorate World AIDS Day.

Women living with HIV and AIDS in Uganda and other civil society organizations are calling on all candidates and political parties in the 2011 Elections to commit to defeating AIDS in Uganda by pledging to implement the 10-point Election Platform to Stop AIDS through Treatment and Prevention.

The platform includes demands for universal access to treatment for adults and children, ending stock outs of medicines, increasing the number of trained health workers, and ensuring access to accurate prevention information for young girls and women.

AIDS is a health priority; we expect all credible candidates and parties to address this problem. Despite publication of manifestos by all political parties, our analysis shows that they lack detailed description of how the parties, if put in power, would scale up the AIDS response through effective HIV treatment and prevention.

We call on all political parties and candidates to publicly adopt and support the 2011 Election Platform and include these targets in their own party manifestos." According to the civil society groups, the 2011 Election Pledge, if implemented, will achieve ambitious progress in treating, preventing, and ultimately ending the AIDS crisis in Uganda.

"Patients are dying waiting in long line for access to life sustaining HIV treatment. More than 110,000 Ugandans are infected with HIV every year. There is an epidemic of pediatric HIV, with 25,000 newborns infected annually. Success in the battle against AIDS—and the fight for health for all Ugandans—requires a new wave of commitment," said Dr Watiti of Maldimay Center.

"The fundamental problem facing the country is the lack of accountability, resources and evidence-based policies to defeat AIDS. Without a renewed commitment to scaling up lifesaving HIV treatment, effective prevention, increasing national funding, and defending the human rights of vulnerable Ugandans, the country is at risk of more increases in new infections."

New data shows that HIV treatment reduces the risk of HIV transmission by more than 90% [i] but clinics in Uganda are turning away patients in urgent need of medicines because of insufficient funding, undermining prevention as well as treatment efforts.

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NOTE: The election platform is available for download here: http://ugandaelectionstopaids.blogspot.com/p/election-platform_23.html

[i] Donnell D. et al. ART and risk of heterosexual HIV-1 transmission in HIV-1 serodiscordant African couples: a multinational prospective study. Seventeenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections, San Francisco, abstract 136, 2010..