



## International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa

### ICWEA Statement on World TB Day 2025

#### Yes! We Can End TB: Commit, Invest, Deliver

The International Community of Women Living with HIV in Eastern Africa (ICWEA) joins the rest of the World to commemorate the World TB Day 2025. While recognizing the Global Theme **Yes! We Can End TB: Commit, Invest, Deliver**, ICWEA calls for sustained investment in TB prevention, care, and treatment and Research to end TB by 2030. This day serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need to continue global efforts in eliminating TB, a disease that remains a major public health threat, particularly in Africa, where the overlap of TB and HIV presents compounded challenges.

TB continues to affect over 10 million people globally each year (WHO), each day, close to 3425 people lose their lives to TB, and 30,000 people fall ill due to this preventable and curable disease. Tuberculosis (TB) remains one of the world's deadliest infectious killers and a growing challenge in Eastern Africa with all countries still among the top 30 TB and TB/HIV high burden countries. In Uganda for example with each day close to 240 people falling ill with TB and approximately 30 losing their lives; More than half of TB-related deaths are among people living with HIV, yet it is preventable and curable and the ongoing donor funding cuts in Africa and across the world are deeply concerning. ICWEA recognizes the facts that while significantly more men than women contract TB and die from it, TB can have particularly severe consequences for women, especially during their reproductive years and during pregnancy. The impact of the disease is also strongly felt by their children and families.

The U.S. has long been the biggest funder in the global fight against TB, as well as other diseases like HIV and malaria however, the unprecedented reduction in funding for an infectious disease that has historically been neglected is now having far-reaching consequences, undermining the global fight against TB. With the loss of financing, public health programs have shut down, leaving many undiagnosed and suffering. Tuberculosis is fully treatable, yet with the lack of international funding, the entire program, including research, diagnostics and successful treatment, has ceased. Not only is this leading to a rise in new active TB cases, but those already on treatment are at risk of being lost to follow-up, further contributing to the spread of the disease.

These funding cuts serve as a stark reminder of the critical importance of public funding for TB programs, funding that is now being threatened by the Trump administration's assault on global health infrastructure. Any disruptions in TB services, even temporary—whether due to financial,

political, or operational challenges—typically have fatal consequences for the millions of people affected by TB worldwide

ICWEA is deeply alarmed by the implications of these cuts, which threaten to reverse hard-won gains in the fight against TB.

“We are losing all the gains we have attained in ending TB in Prevention diagnosis, treatment, care, and Research due to the funding cuts. TB patients must be consistent with treatment, and fall-off is a cause for a relapse in illness and increase the chances of infecting others too” Dorothy Namutamba Deputy Executive Director of ICWEA and a TB advocate.

We urge African governments to prioritize sustainable and adequate funding to end TB and ensure equitable access to care for all those affected.

We also emphasize the importance of community-led monitoring (CLM) to capture real-time evidence of gaps in TB service delivery. CLM plays a vital role in ensuring that programs remain responsive to the needs of affected communities and that no one is left behind in accessing treatment.

Fred Ebil, a TB survivor and a member of the Fellowship of TB Survivors Uganda, warns of “double trouble” for people living with both HIV and TB.

“They will stop coming to facilities for treatment and will be lost to follow-up,” Fred laments.

On this World TB Day, ICWEA reaffirms its commitment to raising awareness, advocating for sustained investment in TB prevention, care, and treatment, and ensuring that global and public health systems are strengthened to prevent the resurgence and spread of TB.

Together, we can build a world where TB is no longer a public health threat.

**#WorldTBDay #EndTB**