



International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa

ICWEA Statement on the Launch of the UNAIDS Global AIDS Update 2025

“When funding is cut, women and girls pay the price.”

Kampala, Uganda | 10 July 2025

The International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa (ICWEA) tremendously welcomes the UNAIDS Global AIDS Update 2025, which affirms the urgent realities that women and girls living with HIV have long raised. The Report issues a sobering warning: Over 6 million HIV infections and 4 million AIDS-related deaths are projected by 2029 if current funding trends are not reversed. We are intensely recognizant that behind every statistic there is a life- a woman, a girl, a family, with the burden of HIV and subsequently the funding crises falling hardest on adolescent girls and young women (AGYW), especially in Sub Saharan Africa.

ICWEA continues to work with and for communities already experiencing the brunt of these setbacks. Through our community-led monitoring, evidence-based advocacy, and accountability efforts, we continue to ensure that the lived experiences of women are informing HIV policy and practice. We are deeply concerned that the erosion of resources is not only halting progress towards ending HIV by 2023 but reinforcing harmful practices within healthcare and public health systems.

As part of our regional (THRIVE¹) advocacy campaign, ICWEA is leading a movement to raise awareness and drive actions against new and evolving forms of violence against women and girls living with HIV in Eastern Africa, specifically in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania resulting from HIV interventions aimed at controlling further spread of HIV and ending AIDS by 2030 as a global target goal. These forms of violence are less visible and often overlooked but psychologically very destructive and rooted in structural, institutional and health care system failures. These include: Forced or pressured partner notification and index testing, where consent and safety are not prioritized; The APN processes often lead to involuntary disclosure of women’s HIV status to their partners, which triggers Intimate Partner Violence (IPV).

- Coerced sterilization and cervical cancer screening, which violate women living with HIV’s bodily autonomy, integrity and dignity;
- Limited access to a range of HIV prevention tools like CAB-LA, the Dapivirine Vaginal Ring (DVR), and Lenacapavir (LEN), which undermines informed choice and increases vulnerability, especially among adolescent girls and young women.

While health frameworks and directives call for person centered, integrated services, many national systems continue to replicate violence and paternalism in the name of efficiency, these practices will deepen mistrust, erode confidence in care systems, and discourage health seeking behaviours, eventually driving new HIV infections.

¹ THRIVE in full: Together Halting Violence and Inequality



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Centering Women's Voices

Restoring trust as co-leaders of the Choice Manifesto, ICWEA reaffirms that HIV prevention must be anchored in freedom, autonomy and trust, and calls for HIV prevention to be grounded in real choices. We advocate for a full range of options to be made available and affordable to every adolescent girl and young woman without fear, shame, stigma or coercion.

Our Call to Action

ICWEA calls on governments, donors, and partners to:

- a. Immediate restoration, prioritization and scale up HIV funding for community-led and women led responses.
- b. Review and revise the national HIV policies or directives to explicitly prohibit coercive or non-consensual practices, particularly those that deny women actual informed consent and bodily autonomy.
- c. Ensure meaningful inclusion of women and girls living with HIV in all HIV strategic planning processes.
- d. Address new and existing forms of violence that silence women and restrict access to life saving care.
- e. Expand access to diverse HIV prevention tools under the Choice framework, especially for adolescent girls and young women.

“Women living with HIV have led this response for decades. What we need now is global support to keep going.”

The world can still end AIDS by 2030 -but only if we center women, fund communities, and dismantle violence in all its forms.

END