

NEPHAK WORLD AIDS DAY 2013 STATEMENT

CHAMPIONING PLHIV LEADERSHIP TO ACHIEVE ZERO NEW HIV INFECTIONS, ZERO DISCRIMINATION AND ZERO AIDS AND TB RELATED DEATHS IN KENYA

This World AIDS day, the National Empowerment Network of people living with HIV/AIDS (NEPHAK) is glad to join other stakeholders under the leadership of the Ministry of Health to celebrate the progress that has been registered in the national response to HIV. The Kenya AIDS Indicator Survey 2012 report clearly confirms that the country has registered significant progress in the national response to HIV. National HIV prevalence has declined and more than half a million PLHIV (640,000) have been put on life saving ART. Clearly, Kenya is on the path towards achieving zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS related deaths.

We continue to celebrate the courage of the many Kenyans who have braved stigma, accepted to test for HIV and proceeded to enroll for HIV treatment. NEPHAK remains committed to its mandate of leveraging on the lived experiences of PLHIV to inform the national response strategies and interventions. On the occasion of World AIDS Day 2013, we reiterate our commitment to the partnership with both NACC and NASCOP to promote greater and meaningful involvement of PLHIV and those affected by AIDS in the national response to HIV. It is our firm belief that Kenya can begin to reverse the spread and impact of HIV through the adoption of combination prevention. Combination Prevention should be at the centre of the National HIV Prevention Roadmap!

Nonetheless, we cannot close our eyes to the challenges that still exist. The number of children infected with HIV who are accessing treatment remains very low! NEPHAK is aware of the policy, legal, programmatic and systems obstacles to Universal Access in Kenya. Critical legal-and policy-related obstacles need to be factored into the response in order to create an enabling environment to maximize progress towards the delivery of universal access to services. Devolution is particularly problematic especially in the HIV sub-sector and we can only hope that services will not be disrupted. We also recognize the evolving nature of the AIDS epidemic and how HIV is now increasingly being associated with other non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The threat of TB among PLHIV in Kenya continues to be grave. People are accepting to live with HIV but are dying from TB. Therefore, national efforts aimed at integration and decentralization of health services also needs to be accelerated.

We are also aware of the fragile nature of our national response to HIV. There is a lack of predictable sustainable funding to HIV. The country will not achieve zero new HIV infections with external funding only. NEPHAK today calls upon the Kenyan government to increase domestic funding to HIV. It is high time the government moved forward with the proposal on the AIDS and Priority NCDs Trust Fund. It is only through this that Kenya will have the predictable and sustainable resources needed to procure the supplies needed for the delivery of universal access and promotion of human rights.

The threat posed by the proposed amendment to the Public Benefits Organizations (PBOs) Act 2013 is both real and grave to PLHIV and other patients. NEPHAK identifies with the NGOs calling for dialogue and review of this amendment. The amendment will cripple our efforts which aim at complimenting

the government's work, aimed at meeting the national health goals. We recognize the government's role in regulating all actors in the country, but this should be done in a manner that does not infringe on the constitutional right to the highest attainable standards of care for all Kenyans, including those already infected with HIV and other conditions.