

PRESS RELEASE

New Champions join efforts for an AIDS-free generation in Africa

Ahead of the African Union Summit, former Presidents of Malawi, Mali, Nigeria and South Africa are among the new Champions committing to Fast-Tracking access to HIV prevention and treatment services in sub-Saharan Africa.

JOHANNESBURG/GABORONE, Botswana, 23 January 2015—Today, the **Champions for an AIDS-Free Generation** (Champions) announced that four leaders are joining their distinguished ranks.

The new Champions are: Kgalema Motlanthe, former President of South Africa; Joyce Banda, former President of Malawi; Alpha Oumar Konaré, former President of Mali; and Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of Nigeria.

“We are thrilled to welcome these respected leaders, who have championed the AIDS response in their countries and on the continent,” said Festus Mogae, Chairperson of the Champions.

“Now, more than ever, Africa must Fast-Track the AIDS response if we are to end the epidemic by 2030.”

Champions for an AIDS-Free Generation was first launched in 2008 by Festus Mogae, the former President of Botswana. The Champions programme works to ensure that all children are born free from HIV in Africa and that all people have access to quality HIV prevention and treatment services.

“We have seen tremendous progress in each of our countries and we will continue to work across Africa to ensure that all babies are born free from HIV and that their mothers can remain healthy,” said Speciosa Wandira-Kazibwe, former Vice-President of Uganda. “We welcome the new Champions into the programme, and together we shall support Africa to play its leadership role for an AIDS-free generation.”

“I am very happy to be joining the Champions for an AIDS-Free Generation,” said former President Motlanthe. “We are committed to accelerating our response to the epidemic so that we can end AIDS as a public health threat across the continent by 2030.”

The Champions is a distinguished group of former presidents and influential African leaders committed to an AIDS-free generation. Individually and collectively the Champions rally and support regional leaders towards ending the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat. The Champions transcend political partisanship to speak freely and independently about the issues that need solutions, both publically and behind the scenes.

“Through the Champions we can harness the wisdom and courage of great leaders who have changed countless lives by breaking the silence about AIDS,” said Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS.

Since 2009, there has been a 43% decline in new HIV infections among children in the 21 priority countries of the *Global Plan towards the elimination of new HIV infections among children by 2015 and keeping their mothers alive* in Africa. There were 210 000 [180 000–250 000] new HIV infections among children in sub-Saharan Africa in 2013.

Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region most affected by the AIDS epidemic. In 2013, there were 24.7 million [23.5 million–26.1 million] people living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Champions are:

- **Festus Mogae**, former President of Botswana and Chairperson of the Champions.
- **Joyce Banda**, former President of Malawi.
- **Joaquim Chissano**, former President of Mozambique.
- **Kenneth Kaunda**, former President of Zambia.
- **Alpha Oumar Konaré**, former President of Mali.
- **Benjamin William Mkapa**, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania.
- **Kgalema Motlanthe**, former President of South Africa.
- **Olusegun Obasanjo**, former President of Nigeria.
- **Desmond Tutu**, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate.
- **Speciosa Wandira-Kazibwe**, former Vice-President of Uganda.
- **Edwin Cameron**, Justice of the Constitutional Court of South Africa.
- **Miriam Were**, former Chairperson of the Kenya National AIDS Control Council.

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www.aidsfreechampions.org

UNAIDS

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) leads and inspires the world to achieve its shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. UNAIDS unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank—and works closely with global and national partners to maximize results for the AIDS response. Learn more at unaids.org and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.