

Accountability; Stop AIDS keep the promise

The International community of women living with HIV/AIDS East Africa; an international Network for and by HIV Positive women joins the rest of the world to commemorate 2006 World AIDS Day.

While recognizing that women account for over 50% of the Global HIV infection and that approximately over 19.2 million women live with HIV Globally, almost all countries and nations are still struggling to have comprehensive, multisectoral and integrated programmes for women. Domestic violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights challenges faced by women, limited and or no access to care support and treatment, tokenistic involvement of women especially where decisions are made are still being reported and recorded in almost all countries/nations as increasing especially in countries where HIV prevalence is high.

And yet promises have been made and are documented: -GIPA, UNGASS Declaration - Access to treatment to all by 2010, the WHO 3x5 and Abuja Declaration- the list is endless.....

We hold each other accountable to keep the promise in order to end AIDS. Access to treatment by all who need it must be a priority, preventing further infections through PMTCT programmes and continuous programmes for mothers must be scaled up to reach all. TUBERCULOSIS and other opportunistic infections must be given enough resources and high on the agenda. All avenues should be explored to reduce the vulnerability of women, which is critical in reducing HIV prevalence. Women must not only be left to carry the burden of the disease, but must be meaningfully involved at all levels of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. They know what it takes to end the pandemic; it will help in putting the limited resources where the wanting is high.

We need total commitment and not just mere contribution. The resources are available, the targets can be set, and strategies are known and the results very clear. What is lacking is availing these resources to areas and programmes that can bring results; the political will of our leaders to END AIDS is still DOUBTED. We call on all our leaders for total commitment to STOP AIDS. If SARS, EBOLA, the WAR in Iraq could be halted, what about AIDS which has claimed more people!!! Where is the problem?

On this day, the International Community of Women living with HIV/AIDS in East Africa raise and add our voice to the many; to our fellow fighters, advocates and activists, political leaders and all players to be accountable and keep to our promise. THE WAR must be won and this calls for concerted efforts.