



TOBEKA MADIBA ZUMA
FOUNDATION



PRESS RELEASE

The Executive Director of UNAIDS appoints Tobeka Madiba Zuma, First Lady of South Africa, as UNAIDS Special Advocate for the Health of Women, Youth and Children

PRETORIA/GENEVA, 2 December 2015—The Executive Director of UNAIDS, Michel Sidibé, has appointed South African First Lady Tobeka Madiba Zuma as UNAIDS Special Advocate for the Health of Women, Youth and Children. During a ceremony in Pretoria, South Africa, Mr Sidibé and Madam Zuma also signed a memorandum of understanding between UNAIDS and the Tobeka Madiba Zuma (TMZ) Foundation to strengthen collaboration between UNAIDS and the TMZ Foundation.

Madam Zuma will use her position as a UNAIDS Special Advocate to speak out on issues related to women's sexual and reproductive health, especially on HIV prevention among adolescent girls and young women.

"I am delighted to be here with the First Lady of South Africa, Madam Zuma, to recognize her work to improve the lives of women and girls in South Africa, and to appoint her as UNAIDS Special Advocate for the Health of Women, Youth and Children," said Mr Sidibé. "UNAIDS will continue to support her in her good work."

Madam Zuma, as patron and founder of the TMZ Foundation, conducts extensive advocacy work on women's health, with a focus on HIV, tuberculosis and breast and cervical cancer.

"I would like to thank UNAIDS for having worked with myself and the TMZ Foundation in recent years. I would also like to thank my husband, President Jacob Zuma, for taking bold steps to take us from denial to taking responsibility for the HIV epidemic," said Madam Zuma. "I am happy and honoured, and pledge to use my position as First Lady of South Africa to raise awareness of these issues."

Adolescent girls and young women in South Africa between the ages of 15 and 24 are at a much higher risk of HIV. It is estimated that new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women in this age group account for a quarter of all new HIV infections in South Africa.

There are a range of biological and sociological factors that place young women and girls at higher risk of HIV infection, including early sexual debut, relationships with men much older than themselves, who may already be HIV-positive, and gender-based violence.

"Girls should have books, not babies," remarked Madam Zuma, reflecting on the high prevalence of teenage pregnancy in the country.

The memorandum of understanding between UNAIDS and the TMZ Foundation will help to advance efforts in South Africa to improve the health of women, children and young people as part of the Sustainable Development Goals.

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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 end the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Learn more at unaids.org and connect with us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Tobeka Madiba Zuma Foundation

The Tobeka Madiba Zuma Foundation, founded in 2009, advocates for prevention, treatment and care of non-communicable diseases, a #cancersmart South Africa, and HIV prevention, treatment and care. For more information follow TMZ Foundation on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.