

## PRESS RELEASE

### **UNAIDS supports pledge by First Ladies of Africa and China for an AIDS-free generation**

*Africa–China Partnership: Caring for an AIDS-Free Generation launched on the sidelines of the Forum for China–Africa Cooperation in Johannesburg*

**JOHANNESBURG, 5 December 2015**—The Organisation of African First Ladies against HIV/AIDS (OAFLA), along with Peng Liyuan, First Lady of China, today reaffirmed their commitment to an AIDS-free generation. The OAFLA Africa–China HIV advocacy event took place on the sidelines of the Forum for China–Africa Cooperation Heads of State Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa.

“We need to take advantage of our privileged positions as First Ladies to advocate with our people, and especially our youth, to ensure everyone takes responsibility for their health and has access to adequate services,” said Tobeka Madiba Zuma, First Lady of South Africa.

Keeping in line with the OAFLA focus on maternal and child health, discussions during the event focused on further reducing new HIV infections among children in Africa and China, and ensuring that all children, their mothers and pregnant women living with HIV have access to antiretroviral therapy.

“This is the start of a long and fruitful partnership between Africa and China towards achieving an AIDS-free generation,” said Nana Lordina Dramani Mahama, First Lady of Ghana and President of OAFLA. “We must continue to expand prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission programmes to ensure universal access to HIV treatment for all women and children. We will work hand-in-hand to secure a beautiful partnership for an AIDS-free generation.”

Both Africa and China have dramatically scaled up their prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission programmes and produced impressive results. Seven African countries have rapidly reduced new HIV infections among children by 60% or more, and a further seven have experience a 30–60% decline.

Michel Sidibé, UNAIDS Executive Director, urged the First Ladies of OAFLA and China to continue their high level advocacy on HIV. “This meeting is happening at a great moment,” said Mr Sidibe. “It is just one day after President Xi laid out a new partnership between China and Africa that will enable us to have a generation free from HIV. It is also important because we are together—and I know that the First Ladies have been fighting for a long time to be a voice for the voiceless.”

The First Ladies highlighted that HIV treatment programmes are leaving children far behind. They reiterated that urgent action is needed to accelerate the HIV treatment response among children. Without treatment, half of children living with HIV will die before their second birthday.

Peng Liyuan, First Lady of China, related four key issues critical to ending AIDS by 2030: universal access to HIV treatment; public information and education; educational opportunities for adolescents; and economic development to eliminate poverty. She reiterated China's support to address HIV in Africa, especially maternal and child health. "As long as the international community works together we will be able to realize an AIDS-free world," she added.

The First Ladies are extremely important advocates and very influential," said Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization. "They must continue to advocate for an AIDS-free generation and we will be there to support them."

The First Ladies of Africa and China will join forces to achieve an AIDS-free generation by sharing information, helping each other to build expertise, and mobilizing resources for joint advocacy to support women and children living with and affected by HIV.

Aaron Motsoaledi, Minister of Health of South Africa, and Gertrude Mutharika, First Lady of Malawi and Vice-President of OAFRA, joined the panellists in pledging their support to reach the Fast-Track Targets to end the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030.

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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](http://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.