

Report for Candle Light Commemoration 2020

National Theme: Ending AIDS-Faith Communities in Action



2nd left: Archbishop Church of Uganda His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Stephen S. Kazimba Mugalu; 4th left Minister for the Presidency; Chairperson HIV Committee of Parliament; UNAIDS CD; UAC Board Members and Chairperson PLHIV during the Press briefing for Candle Light commemoration

Acknowledgement

Uganda joined the rest of the world to commemorate the International Candlelight Day on 17th May 2020. The international theme was 'We remember, we take action and we live beyond HIV'. The tailored national theme for Uganda was 'Ending AIDS by 2030, Faith communities in action'. The commemoration events were coordinated by Uganda AIDS Commission and led by the Faith Based Organizations (FBO) Self Coordinating Entity through the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the commemoration this year was largely 'scientific' marked through a one-month Media campaign with messages put out through various media channels.

Uganda AIDS Commission greatly appreciates all our partners who supported the commemoration of the Candlelight events. I thank the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance for providing technical support throughout the commemoration season and for hosting a live Panel discussion at the Government Citizen's Interaction Centre at the Ministry. I thank UBC television for the live broadcast of the panel discussion.

I greatly appreciate the Media Task team that comprised of officials from; the Media Self Coordinating Entity; Inter-religious Council of Uganda; UNAIDS; Ministry of ICT & National Guidance; Ministry of Health and UAC. This Team did a tremendous job in ensuring a vibrant media campaign using television, radio, print and social media platforms.

Special appreciation goes to the Inter- Religious Council of Uganda especially the Council of Presidents for providing leadership in commemoration of the event through places of worship countrywide. I thank all religious leaders for promoting the fight against HIV and AIDS in your respective places of worship. Much gratitude goes to the key Note Speaker Apostle Dr. Joseph Serwadda, the Co-Chair IRCU Council of Presidents for the intellectual Key note address to the nation on behalf of the Inter Religious Council of Uganda. The address that was delivered under the slogan "Lighting a candle of Hope in the Face of HIV and AIDS" was full of wisdom and will remain as a great inspiration to all of us Stakeholders in the national response to HIV and AIDS.

Further appreciation goes to the UBC Moderator Mr. Gyagenda Semakula and the excellent Team of Panelists that included: Ms. Lillian Mworeko - ED International Coalition of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa (ICWEA), Dr. Andrew Kambugu – ED of Infectious Diseases Institute; Dr. Karusa Kiragu UNAIDS Country Director; Ms. Martha Nakatto from the Uganda Network of Young People living with HIV and Prof. Vinand Nantulya – Chairman Private Sector One Dollar Initiative. I appreciate the Chairperson of NAFOPHANU- Dr. Stephen Watiti and Prof. Can. G. Byamugisha for their expert inspiration in commemorating the candlelight event.

I acknowledge the strategic support and oversight of the Minister in charge of the Presidency, Hon. Esther Mbayo. Additionally, I acknowledge the Chairperson of the Committee of Parliament on HIV and other related matters for the commitment in driving the commemoration forward. I thank the Chairman and Board of Uganda AIDS Commission for providing strategic leadership throughout the activities.

Special thanks go to the Embassy of Ireland for participating in the activities and for the financial support towards the events through UNAIDS. I thank UNAIDS for the continued technical support to UAC in coordination of the events.

Uganda AIDS Commission is indebted to all Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, local Governments; the constituency of People living with HIV; Civil Society Organizations, the Media; Cultural entities; Private Sector; Development Partners; Parliament; the Country Coordination Mechanism of the Global fund and the Academia for the technical and operational support that made the commemoration event successful. Finally, I appreciate UAC Staff for the tireless commitment that led to a successful commemoration of Candlelight Memorial. I look forward to collaboration with all Stakeholders in implementing the recommendations in the report.



Dr. Nelson Musoba
Director General

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgement.....	i
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background to the commemoration of the Candlelight Memorial Day	2
1.2 Theme of the Candle Light Memorial 2020	3
1.3 Objectives of the Candle-light 2020	3
2.0 Approaches in commemoration of National Candlelight Memorial 2020	4
2.1 Progress made in the commemoration of CLM 2020.....	4
2.2 Engagement with IRCU in the implementation of the Candle Light 2020.....	5
2.3 Engagement of other SCEs in the commemoration of CL Commemoration.....	12
Annex 1: Feedback from social media during the Commemoration campaign.....	28
Annex 2: Bios of the Panelists at the Candlelight Commemoration event	29

1.0 Introduction

Uganda has made a lot of progress in responding to the burden of HIV and AIDS over the last four decades. HIV prevalence was brought down from 18% in the late 1980s to 5.7% in 2019 (UNAIDS 2019). However, HIV and AIDS continue to pose a major public health and economic challenge, threatening the attainment of global targets towards ending the epidemic particularly in the Sub-Saharan Africa. There are many factors driving the HIV epidemic that are behavioral, socio cultural and biomedical including concurrent sexual partnerships, discordance and non-disclosure, transactional and commercial sex, low and inconsistent condom use, low male circumcision, alcohol and drug abuse. Structural, socio-cultural and economic aspects that include: poverty and wealth; gender inequalities; stigma, human rights and discrimination; as well as lack of access to prevention, care and treatment services. All these continue to provide a fertile ground to sustain the epidemic, particularly in Uganda through Multi sectoral HIV and AIDS response.

Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC) employed a multi sectoral approach to coordinate stakeholders for a harmonized national response to HIV/AIDS. As part of advocacy efforts, UAC spearheads commemoration of key global and national events with an aim to re-invigorate commitment of leaders as well as stimulate communities to reflect on their contribution in fighting the epidemic. The key events include: The International Candle Light Memorial (CLM), Philly Lutaaya Day and the International World AIDS Day. Currently, Uganda like other countries is battling the COVID-19 pandemic, and the country is under lockdown, which affects the modality of commemorating the advocacy events. The Candlelight Memorial Day falls on 17th May every year but could not be commemorated in the conventional way that usually culminates into a community gathering. However, the long experience of commemorating CLM day provided an opportunity to reach out to the community with HIV and AIDS as well as COVID-19 messages. UAC ensured integration of messages for the national HIV and AIDS response messages and COVID 19 response.

1.1 Background to the commemoration of the Candlelight Memorial Day

The International Candlelight memorial is one of the oldest and largest grass root mobilization campaigns for HIV awareness in the World. The day started in 1983 and takes place every third Sunday in May. It is a day when communities stand in solidarity with those who lost their dear ones to AIDS; provide a platform for advocacy and stimulate increased individual resolve and actions to fight the epidemic. It is the day when everyone is called upon to rise up to face the challenges encountered in the struggle. In Uganda, since the early 1980s, over 2million people are estimated to have succumbed to HIV related illness. Annually over 28,000 people die as result HIV and 52,000 new HIV infections are recorded especially among the young people in the country (UNAIDS 2019). Addressing this burden therefore calls for high-level political commitment and action, enhanced community mobilization and engagement for social and behavior change, respect for the rights of people living with HIV and other vulnerable populations.

In 2020, UAC entered in partnership with the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) to take the lead in the commemoration of Candle Light 2020. IRCU coordinates the Faith Based Organizations Self Coordinating Entity (FBO SCE) under the multi sectoral approach that is led by UAC. The Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) founded in 2001, is an indigenous, national faith-based organization uniting efforts of seven religious institutions to jointly address issues of common concern. The member organizations that constitute IRCU are; the Roman Catholic Church, the Province of the Church of Uganda, the Uganda Orthodox Church, the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council, the Seventh-day Adventist Uganda Union, the Born Again Faith and the National Alliance of Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches in Uganda. IRCU encompasses a nation-wide network of not for profit institutions where almost 40% social services in Uganda are delivered.

For commemoration of the Candlelight event, UAC harnessed the unique feature of the IRCU which commands a following of approximately 97% of Uganda's population. With

the combination of excellent countrywide network of structures, time-tested policies and community-based capacity, IRCU has an immense capacity to deliver every programme, providing leadership and places of worship as centers of social transformation. IRCU ensures that communities are linked through formal and informal partnerships that allow the provision of all elements of comprehensive services to be easily accessible to all whenever needed. IRCU also ensures that services are reliable, consistent with and meet the national standards.

Through partnership with IRCU therefore, UAC has over the years reached many communities with HIV and AIDS programmes.

1.2 Theme of the Candle Light Memorial 2020

The International theme for Candle Light Memorial 2020 was **'We remember- We take action- We live beyond HIV'**. Uganda customized this to the National theme: **'Ending AIDS; Faith Communities in action'**. Candlelight memorial was therefore an opportunity to reinvigorate inter-Religious action and collaboration by all communities towards accelerated HIV and AIDS response.

1.3 Objectives of the Candle-light 2020

The Candlelight event served as an important intervention for global solidarity, breaking down barriers of stigma and discrimination, and giving hope to new generations. Specifically, the objectives of the candle light 2020 commemoration in Uganda were:

- i. To mobilize Religious leaders countrywide to spearhead the fight against stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV
- ii. To promote the rights of people living with HIV during public health emergencies
- iii. To stimulate Leadership and all actors to take individual and collective responsibility to end new HIV infections.

2.0 Approaches in commemoration of National Candlelight Memorial 2020

The Candle Light Memorial 2020 coincided with the unprecedented global and national COVID-19 pandemic. UNAIDS provided guidance that 2020 candlelight memorial will be carried out without assemblies of people due to COVID-19. It was recommended that members of the public participate in this year's memorial virtually by sharing actions on social media. For Uganda, this emergency therefore dictated a change in approach from the traditional national commemoration characterized with mass mobilization that is crowned off by a huge public assembly in a selected district. In the same vein, information has been provided that People living with HIV and other persons with conditions that compromise their immunity are more vulnerable and may develop full blown diseases after being infected with COVID- 19. They should therefore take extra caution in applying the prevention measures.

UAC and Partners collaborated with the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda that took the lead as the Faith Based Organizations Self coordinating entity (SCE) in the commemoration of the CL. Other partners included the Ministry of Information, Communication Technology & National Guidance; Ministry of health, Local governments, Media, Parliament, People Living with HIV (PLHIV), Private Sector, Young People and Implementing Partners among others. An intensive media campaign was carried out at the national and District level using various channels including social media engagement. IRCU coordinated her member organizations so that sermons that were delivered during the commemoration season focused on prevention of HIV and COVID-19.

2.1 Progress made in the commemoration of CLM 2020

- i. Over 25 million people reached through various platforms in the country such as sermons by religious leaders countrywide
- ii. Rights of PLHIV promoted across the country and accessibility to essential services was promoted during the commemoration season

- iii. Leaderships involvement in the promotion and advocacy for HIV response across the country
- iv. Stimulated IRCU Leadership and all actors to take individual and collective responsibility to end new HIV infections

2.2 Engagement with IRCU in the implementation of the Candle Light 2020

Pre-Candle Light Memorial events

a) Launch at the Media Centre

As part of the pre-candlelight memorial events, the Media Centre hosted a press briefing which served as the official launch of the commemoration of the Candlelight Memorial event. Several Media houses and online bloggers covered the event and reported the briefings. The event was graced by the Hon. Minister In-charge of the Presidency, His Grace the Archbishop of the Province of Church of Uganda and the Chairperson of the National Forum of People Living with HIV Networks in Uganda (NAFOPHANU). Other key dignitaries were the Chairman and Director General UAC, UNAIDS Country Representative and the Chairperson HIV Committee of Parliament.

In his remarks, Archbishop Kazimba reminded Ugandans that unlike other illnesses, AIDS' devastating impact is not restricted to a few who died of it. It can be felt in every community and that its impact is greatest in areas where inequality thrives. In fact, HIV is a virus that is in close alliance with poverty, ignorance, complacency, stigma and discrimination and inequity. He further reiterated that injustice, stigma and discrimination will not have the last word.



He called upon all religious leaders at various places of worship, to light a candle during prayers on Friday, Saturday and Sunday and take a moment to commemorate those who died of AIDS.

The Archbishop further invited all Ugandans and partners to “**Light a Candle of Hope**” on May 17, 2020 starting at 8:00pm to 9:00pm. He called upon all Ugandans to use the moment to remember and reflect on colleagues who died of AIDS and give hope to those living with HIV.

In conclusion, he stated that Faith leaders are doing what is within their mandate using their resources and leadership to provide inclusive, non-stigmatizing, HIV and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services. He further pledged the commitment of faith leaders to work with government and development partners to achieve a future in which all Ugandans especially young people are educated and involved in the battle against HIV, and that every person living with HIV, especially youth, are empowered activists in education, health rights and dignity.



Arch Bishop Church of Uganda signing in commemoration of people who have died due to AIDS in Uganda



Chairperson PLHIV Dr Stephen Watiti with His Grace Arch Bishop of the Church of Uganda at the Candlelight press briefing

b) Prayers

In the spirit of collective responsibility, various places of worship held prayers during which messages for the AIDS candlelight memorial were integrated. Prayers were held at the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council, within the Church of Uganda, Seventh Day Adventist Church and the Catholic Church in Mityana, among others. The prayers were led by the Deputy Mufti for the Muslims, Archbishop Kazimba for Church of Uganda and Archbishop Ziwa for the Catholic Church who is also the Chairman Episcopal conference.

c) Radio Talk Shows

As part of the strategies to create awareness and mobilize communities to join the global and national commemoration of the candlelight memorial, IRCU and UAC organized a series of radio talk shows at regional level. These talk shows were attended by senior religious leaders and selected members of the District AIDS Committees. The host radio

stations included Namirembe Radio Pacise in Arua, Unity FM in Lira, Elgon FM in Mbale, Buddu FM for Greater Masaka which is Uganda's epicenter of HIV and AIDS, AKICA FM in Karamoja region and Baba FM in Busoga region. Others included Jubilee FM in Rwenzori region and Mega FM in Acholi region and others. Over 10 million people were reached throughout the regions. Key issues were appreciating of UAC and IRCU in highlighting the lives that were lost due to AIDS, reawakening the community about HIV interventions and reduction of stigma among the people living with HIV in the Country.

d) National Candlelight Memorial 2020 Event

On May 17, 2020, Uganda commemorated the 37th International AIDS Candlelight Memorial that was coordinated by Uganda AIDS Commission and the Inter Religious Council of Uganda and hosted by the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance. The event which was scientific in nature was widely broadcast through the webinar which was also live on Facebook and YouTube for the online audience. UBC Tv also made live broadcast and Live proceedings were shared in real time in texts and picture form on social media for those who were not tuned in live.

The event featured Apostle Dr. Joseph Serwadda as a Key Note Speaker and a Panel of other key personalities in the field of HIV and COVID-19. The Panelists included: the Director General UAC Dr. Nelson Musoba; A Young Person from the Uganda Network of Young People Living with HIV (UNYPA)- Ms. Clara Nakato; the Executive Director of the International Coalition of Women living with HIV Eastern Africa (ICWEA)- Ms. Lillian Mworeko; the Executive Director of the Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI) – Dr. Andrew Kambugu; the Country Director of UNAIDS – Dr. Karusa Kiragu and the Chairperson of the Private Sector One dollar initiative – Prof. Vinand Nantulya.

This Memorial event is commemorated annually on every third Sunday in May by millions of people, including grassroots communities around the world. In Uganda, the National theme for this year's Memorial was "***Ending AIDS: Faith Communities in Action***"

which was intended to reinvigorate inter- Religious action and collaboration by all communities towards accelerated HIV and AIDS response.

The memorial was further intended to raise awareness on HIV and AIDS, show support for people living with HIV, and to remember those who were lost to AIDS. Additionally, the event promotes action towards eliminating stigma and discrimination for those living with HIV.

e) Keynote Address by Apostle Dr. Joseph Serwadda, Co-Chair IRCU Council of Presidents

The candlelight commemoration was streamed live on UBC and other social media platforms. Apostle Dr. Joseph Serwadda delivered the keynote address to the nation on behalf of the Inter Religious Council of Uganda. The address was delivered under the slogan "***Lighting a candle of Hope in the Face of HIV and AIDS'***".

In the remarks, Dr Serwadda informed the nation about IRCU's harmonized position in ending AIDS as a public health threat that is enshrined in the endorsed pastoral letter. He called upon all leaders not to allow the new malady of corona virus to overshadow the existing efforts that are aimed at combating HIV/AIDS. He stated that leadership, networks, structures and infrastructures of faith based organizations would readily be available to ensure these challenges are addressed.

He called upon religious leaders to use the message enshrined in the pastoral letter and integrate them into routine sermons, homilies and other religious processes. He finally urged Ugandans to adhere to the Ministry of health guidelines to curb the spread of COVID-19 and also prevent the spread of HIV including shunning stigma towards those living with it.

In closing, Dr. Serwadda called upon all Ugandans to demonstrate support by lighting a candle from 8:00 to 9:00 pm to brighten our future and in turn motivate individuals,

families and communities. In light of the restrictions on events and gatherings that can't take place within the country due to COVID 19, people were encouraged to mark the annual AIDS Candlelight Memorial in a more personal way.

Panel discussions

In his submission, Dr. Serwadda warned young ladies that while truck drivers are suspected to be infected with Corona Virus, they may not actually have it but carrying the HIV virus. He called upon Ugandans to learn to live a morally sound life and to consider the fact that we have only one life and not a multiplicity of it.

f) Candle lighting by Religious leaders as part of the commemoration in Fort Portal



Religious leaders lighting the candle during the Commemoration prayers and radio talk shows

d) Printing and distribution of Pastoral letters

UAC supported the IRCU in printing of 2,500 HIV pastoral letters. These were distributed by IRCU to the places of worship in the country. The pastoral letters detail all the HIV thematic areas that religious leaders should use to pass on the HIV messages to the congregations.

2.3 Engagement of other SCEs in the commemoration of CL Commemoration

a) Parliament of Uganda SCE

Members of the HIV Committee of Parliament and other committee members participated in the commemoration of the CL. Some members went to radio stations and encouraged the communities to prevent HIV infections especially during the national lockdown due to COVID-19 pandemic. Engagement of national leaders to reach the communities with accurate HIV information has promoted HIV awareness. Among the key recommendations, Parliament will provide oversight in the country to assess the effects of COVID on HIV interventions and PLHIV in the Country and provide critical analysis and recommendations for government support.



Chairperson Committee of Parliament on HIV and other related matters during the press briefing with Arch Bishop Church of Uganda and National Chairperson of PLHIV

b) Line Ministries

45 Line Ministries participated in the commemoration of the CL through zoom webinar and a few lit the candle at their respective offices due to the lockdown. The following ministries, departments and agencies all participated in the CL event: Education, Gender, labour and Social development, Water and Environment, Office of the President, Works and Transport, Uganda Registration Bureau services, Uganda Police and Uganda People's Defence Forces. The event helped the HIV Focal Point Person in each entity to reach the communities and staff with HIV messages. As a result of such advocacy, many HIV Focal persons are able to reach the HIV positive staff to receive treatment especially during the lockdown due to COVID 19.

c) Private Sector (PS) SCE

The Private Sector Self Coordinating Entity brought together the 22 sub entities in the commemoration of the CL. The sector managed to pass on the HIV prevention messages among the workers especially in the factory areas. Through the HIV Coordination Committee, private sector selected the board member for the One Dollar Initiative, Prov. Vinand Nantulya to participate on the live dialogue on the topic of 'Sustainability of the Private Sector HIV Financing during and post COVID 19 period.

d) People Living with HIV SCE

Members of the constituency of People Living with HIV (PLHIV) participated in the Candle Light memorial through the national press briefing, Tv and radio talk shows, community drug distribution and satellite gathering taking into account the MOH guidelines for on COVID 19 pandemic. The PLHIV structures in 92 districts reached their members to commemorate CL. The district and sub county coordinators for PLHIV are increasingly doing a wonderful job in reaching the PLHIV members across the country and integrating HIV care and COVID- 19messages. Some PLHIV district Chairpersons and coordinators have continued to utilize the free airtime to reach the communities with HIV messages.



Chairperson National PLHIV Dr Steven Watiti addressing the press at Media Centre

e) Local Government

UAC through the Decentralized response engaged the district Local Governments (LGs) to commemorate the event through lighting candles and radio talk shows. All the regions were represented and participated in the respective events, e.g. in Mbale, Palisa, Yumbe, Arua, Lira, Soroti, Lwengo, Kotido, Moroto, Abim, Kayunga, Kampala etc. The key messages were HIV prevention and adherence to COVID-19 guidelines.

During the radio talk shows, communities reached with the HIV appreciated the effort of UAC for wakening the population with HIV prevention messages during the COVID-19 pandemic. LGs recommended promotion of periodic HIV messages and engagement with the communities through talk shows and peer to peer support. As part of the commemoration campaign some LGs incorporated members of the District AIDS Committee within the District Taskforces for COVID-19. This has given visibility to PLHIV issues and some are being addressed like food distribution, access to essential medical services.

Key recommendations from Local Governments

- i) HIV services be integrated during the COVID 19 pandemic

- ii) PLHIV members be allowed to access ART at designated points
- iii) Messages targeted for young people be disseminated through radio stations (using jingles, spot messages etc)
- iv) Conduct quarterly radio talk-shows as interactive process with the community for continuous awareness



Deputy Registrar of High Court Mbale and HIV Focal Person with street children commemorating the candle lighting in Mbale district

f) The Media Campaign

Due to the unprecedented global and national COVID-19 pandemic and in order to comply with the existing preventive guidelines on social distancing, stakeholders participated in this year’s memorial virtually by sharing actions through various media channels including social media, print and electro.

The Ministry of ICT and National Guidance and the Media Self Coordinating Entity led the media campaign with the support of UAC, IRCU and UNAIDS. An elaborate

communication plan was developed and effectively executed in collaboration with other partners. This media team spearheaded the one-month media campaign. A number of media engagements were done that created awareness through disseminating accurate and consistent messages on HIV and COVID-19. The engagements generated public attention, solicited commitment of leaders and all relevant stakeholders towards the objectives of the Candlelight event. For social media, the campaign run under the hash tag #EndAIDS2030Ug which was intended to portray and make public the goal of all HIV/AIDS related campaigns in Uganda. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp and YouTube were the social media platforms used for this campaign. Social media is very popular with the young generation so this greatly boosted the number of people who received the campaign messages.

From the analytics, the campaign on Facebook reached **2,100,748** people. Twitter activity reached **1,534,656 people**. Instagram posts were able to reach **57, 049** people. From these numbers, the social media aspect of the Candlelight Memorial Campaign was able to reach out to more than **3,692,453** people.

Video Recording and Dissemination

The Ministry of ICT and NG coordinated recording of three videos that were disseminated on social media. The first video was of Hon. Esther Mbayo who informed Ugandans on the state of HIV in the country. She also shared the challenges that have come with the COVID-19 situation in the fight against HIV/AIDS and how they were being addressed. The video covering the Director General UAC, Dr. Nelson Musoba defined the Candlelight Memorial and the objectives, the rights of People Living with HIV during public Health emergencies like COVID-19 and also laid down the series of actions being taken for People Living with HIV to access health services during the lockdown. The third video of the Chairperson of NAFPHANU, Dr. Stephen Watiti explained what candlelight means for People Living with HIV. He shared in detail the challenges being faced by People Living with HIV during the lockdown. He also gave People Living with HIV advice on how to go about such times especially in the face of stigma and discrimination.

Key Activities by the Media SCE during the commemoration

- i) Writing and publishing four special News Paper Articles on the Candlelight themes
- ii) Coordinating and implementing four Television special appearances on Candlelight
- iii) Coordinating a Television Talk show on HIV and COVID-19

a) News Paper Articles on commemoration of Candlelight event

The Media Self Coordinating through Great Lakes Media wrote and published **four** special articles within the period on candlelight. The special articles were published in the New Vision paper as shown below. Extracts of these informative articles were disseminated on social media and they helped highlight the state of HIV in the country, measures needed to stem the growth of HIV in Uganda and how people living with HIV can be aided to access medication during the COVID19 lockdown.

Monday 4th May 2020. Article by Hon Mbayo in the New Vision – The Minister directed Resident District Commission (RDC)s to ensure that PHLAs are supported to access their drugs during the lockdown. She urged them to ensure that the success in HIV/AIDS are not lost due to COVID-19 restrictions.



According to New vision statistics, the article reached 40,000 readers.

Thursday 7th May 2020

Article by Hon, Nambozo in the New Vision. The article by the Hon Nambozo who is also the chairperson on the HIV/AIDS committee challenged

Parliamentarians to ensure that the HIV

response is funded. She reminded leaders that the presence of COVID-19 should not mean an end to HIV.

According to New Vision statistics, the article reached 40,000 readers.



Friday 15th May 2020 Article by His Grace the Archbishop Kazimba Mugalu in the New Vision. In the article, His Grace challenges other religious leaders to lead by example and ensure that HIV is not forgotten even within COVID.



According to New vision statistics, the article reached 40,000 readers.

Monday 18 May 2020 by Dr Stephen Watiti. Dr Watiti presented the voice of PHLA and the key advocacy actions that they wanted government to prioritize. He made a special appeal for food urging the National Task Force to ensure that PHLAs are represented on the district teams. According to New vision statistics, the article reached 40,000 readers.



Television Programs

Four television appearances together with a one-hour television talk show were organized on different stations to highlight different aspects of the candlelight.

b) TV engagement

10th May 2020 Archbishop Kazimba Mugalu spoke in a special interview with NTV about the candlelight and how Religious leaders can help to ensure that the country achieves its target of ending AIDS by 2030.



NTV Prime news audience at 9pm has an estimated reach of 2 million viewers.



Dr Stephen Watiti in a special Interview with NTV during 1 o'clock news spoke about the Candlelight event and called upon members of the public to follow the online proceedings that will take place on the 17th. **13th May 2020. NTV Lunch time news has an estimated reach of 700,000 million viewers.**

Canon Gideon Byamugisha appeared on NBS Television during the 9 pm Prime News to talk about candlelight 16th **May 2020**



Rev Canon Prof. Gideon during the news appearing for the commemoration of CL on NBS 9 pm news has an estimated reach of 1.8million viewers.

Earlier on the 16th, Canon Gideon Byamugisha appeared on UBC television Luganda news at 7 pm to talk about the candlelight event on the 17th May 2020.



UBC news has an estimated reach of 3 million viewers. The one-hour talk show had an audience reached 2.5 million viewers

c) Social Media Bloggers

Ten social media bloggers we partnered with to cover the candlelight events have been documenting and publishing online reports. Some of the reports by the **Independent**, **Chimp reports** and the **Insider** are listed in the attachment.



g) AIDS Development Partners

UNAIDS and the Embassy of Ireland actively participated in the commemoration of the CL on behalf of the AIDS Development Partners Group. UNAIDS participated in the development of messages and sharing them out using various channels. The UNAIDS Country Director also participated on the panel on the commemoration day and in the talk show on UBC Tv. While the HIV Advisor to the Embassy of Irelands appeared on NTV morning Talk Show with the DG UAC to wrap up the CL commemoration. The topic for discussion was 'Communities and HIV; lessons for COVID-19.



The Director General Uganda AIDS Commission together with the Embassy of Ireland HIV Advisor on a Talk Show hosted by NTV discussed the Candlelight Memorial and innovations in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic

Best practices

- 1) Collaboration with religious leaders through IRCU to pass over HIV and COVID-19 messages enabled a wide reach of millions of followers in the country and worldwide via various media channels
- 2) Harnessing the power of the media to target the different audiences with messages on the HIV and COVID-19 pandemic worked tremendously.
- 3) Messages shared in graphic form attracted much more noticeable interest than those in plain text.
- 4) Coordination of different Self Coordinating Entities to maximize synergies in the implementation of Candle Light memorial proved very successful

Key challenges

- 1) Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the general population missed the HIV testing and other health services that are usually coordinated across the country
- 2) The zoom Webinar during the commemoration event on 17th May 2020 had technological challenges thus panelists and virtual participants could not engage smoothly. Resultantly most of the expert contributions by Panelists and input by the audience was all missed out.
- 3) Scientific commemoration i.e. through virtual means implied that a big number of the population that did not have access to communication gadgets were left out
- 4) Partners in the national response missed out on the opportunity to showcase their work as is normally the case with conventional commemoration events

Recommendations

- 1) UAC and partners should maximize use of the various media channels to reach the communities especially during and post the lockdown due to COVID-19 pandemic. Messages in graphic form should be highly prioritized as they attract a lot of attention.

- 2) IRCU should ensure continuity in dissemination of the pastoral letters and integrating HIV messages during worship
- 3) UAC should continue to designate different SCEs to take the lead in activities for the various advocacy events in the Country
- 4) The Q&A session with the Director General UAC needs to be held frequently considering there were many questions left unanswered in addition to lack of information displayed on many basics to do with HIV/AIDS.

Annex 1: Feedback from social media during the Commemoration campaign

- There was great reception for the webinar online considering the experienced panelists that were scheduled to steer the discussion.
- The online audience welcomed the inclusion of faith communities in the efforts to End AIDS by 2030 in Uganda especially because of the influence they hold over a large mass of people.
- The message of abstinence is still hard to get through to the public, as they prefer other options such as condom use and being faithful to partners.
- People Living with HIV were happy with messages against stigma and discrimination considering it is one of the major challenges they face.
- There was a renewed awareness on the existence of HIV in Uganda. Many people were concentrating on COVID19 and haven't been taking the necessary precautions against HIV.
- There was much more noticeable interest in messages shared in graphic form than those in plain text. This shows that in future campaigns, messages in graphic form should be highly prioritized.
- Following our messages calling on men to take HIV tests, there seemed to be cold responses from them insinuating that there needs to be more targeted effort on this front.
- There were many messages coming in from the public about some leaders of the faith communities convincing people living with HIV to abandon medication. Apostle Dr. Serwada however clarified on this issue and even went ahead to apologize on behalf of the faith communities for the misbehavior of some of their members.
- There are many calls for free condoms and increasing the number of dispensers especially in upcountry hot spots.
- Despite a good amount of effort towards fighting stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV, there is evident need for more efforts towards this end considering that most of the actions that characterize this behavior are not intentional thus the need for more sensitization.

Annex 2: Bios of the Panelists at the Candlelight Commemoration event

Apostle Dr. Joseph Serwadda

Apostle Dr. Joseph Serwadda is a teacher, Journalist and an evangelist. He leads a more than 5000 strong Victory Christian center in Kampala and over 500 churches under its umbrella and about 4 affiliated media outlets across Uganda. He also presides over a host of Evangelical and Pentecostal Pastors and churches under the umbrella organization of Born Again Faith Federation. He is a member and co-Chair, Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) Council of Presidents.

Dr. Nelson Musoba

A Ugandan national currently serving as Director General of Uganda AIDS Commission, Dr. Musoba is a medical doctor with more than 20 years of clinical and public health experience, leading a team of experts in coordinating the national HIV multi-sectoral response. Dr. Musoba served for about half of his professional time at the Ministry of Health headquarters in various capacities.

Dr. Musoba previously worked with the Monitoring and Evaluation of Emergency Plan Project (USAID/MEEPP) as Chief of Party prior to joining Uganda AIDS Commission in 2014. At the Ministry of Health Dr. Musoba was the Senior Health Planner assigned as coordinator of Public Private Partnership desk and later Global Fund implementation unit. His early experience included work at the district level as team leader for the district health management team and earlier as a clinician at various district hospitals.

Ms. Lillian Mworeko

Lillian Mworeko is the Executive Director for the International Community of Women living with HIV Eastern Africa. A Ugandan and a mother of three. She is a gender, human rights and women's rights defender. She is the 2019 CHANGE's Courageous Change Maker Award Winner; 2016 Uganda HIV& AIDS Leadership Award Winner, 2015

Justice Makers Award Winner; 2014 ICW Inaugural Sisterhood Award Winner and 2012 Mayhill High School Old Girls Association (MOGA) Award Winner.

Lillian served as a member of the Global Community Advisory Board for ECHO Trial. She is currently the co-convenor together with UN Women of the Household Settings Thematic Working Group of the Global Partnership for Action to Eliminate all Forms of HIV related Stigma and Discrimination. She is a member of the WHO eMTCT Global Validation Advisory Committee and until August 2019, Lillian was a member of the Global Fund Community Rights and Gender Advisory Group for the Community Rights Gender Department at the Global fund.

Lillian is a go-getter. Passionate about women's priorities and aspiration including their Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights and access to their full rights including prevention, care, treatment and support services.

Dr Andrew D Kambugu

Dr. Andrew Kambugu, the Sande-McKinnell Executive Director at the Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI), College of Health Sciences, Makerere University (Mak). He is an adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Minnesota, USA and also honorary Senior Lecturer in the Department of Medicine at Mak.

He received his basic medical training (MB.ChB) as well as his masters in Internal Medicine (M.Med) at Makerere University in Uganda and undertook specialist training in infectious diseases at the University of Utah and the University of Manitoba. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians (FRCP), United Kingdom (London).

Dr. Kambugu previously served as the Head of the Research Program Prevention Care and Treatment Programmes at the IDI. He has over 14 years of HIV clinical and programming experience and is a member of two national HIV subcommittees of the Ugandan Ministry of Health. He has made significant research contributions in the areas

of antiretroviral therapy and opportunistic infections and has over 120 publications in peer-reviewed journals.

Dr. Karusa Kiragu

Dr. Karusa Kiragu is the UNAIDS Country Director in Uganda. A public health specialist and epidemiologist, she has an established post-doctoral experience in HIV at global and national levels. In Uganda, she leads the UN support towards the 95-95-95 national HIV goals and the response to volatile and intersecting disease environments such as COVID19 and HIV. In particular, she works to ensure that people living with HIV/TB are at the centre of the action. And as an epidemiologist, she is engaged in the intersection of HIV, TB and COVID19 especially among children.

Prior to Uganda, Dr. Kiragu was a senior advisor at UNAIDS Geneva. In the past she worked at the Population Council, Program for Applied Technology in Health (PATH), as well as the Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs. Her Ph.D is from the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene.

Nakato Martha Clara

Martha Clara is a young woman living openly with HIV and works with Uganda Network of Young People Living with HIV (UNYPA). She is a Youth Representative on the Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanism of Uganda and is also a National SRHR Trainer for Young people. She is an outspoken community Activist for a transformative society that is vigilant on Sexual Violence and one that is supportive to persons living with and affected with HIV/AIDS. Throughout her works, she strongly discourages HIV related stigma and discrimination and violence against Adolescent girls and Young women.

In 2019, she was recognized as one of the Five Global Faces of the Fight that championed the Global Fund's Sixth Replenishment campaign Step Up The Fight which was a success with Multi-lateral donors and countries pledging a record of 14 Billion US

Dollars, the largest ever funding raised for global health in the Fight of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria epidemics.

Prof. Nantulya Vinand

A career researcher, with more than 140 publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals. He is Chancellor, Busitema University, one of Uganda's public universities, and Chair of the One Dollar for HIV Initiative Uganda, a private sector- driven endowment fund to finance Uganda's HIV and AIDS Response.

He served at the Global Fund Secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland as Senior Health Advisor, and represented the Fund on the Governing Boards of the Roll Back Malaria, and Stop TB Partnerships. Prior to that, he was Senior Research Scientist in International Health, Harvard School of Public Health. Later, he served on the Strategy Committee of the Global Fund Board, and on its Technical Evaluation Reference Group. Also served on the Board of Trustees, Innovative Vector Control Consortium (IVCC) and on various committees of WHO/TDR; and as Chair, The global Task Force for Retooling TB Control.