

New Vision

Complete HIV eradication in Uganda is possible!

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The monstrous soaring HIV infection rates that earlier subsided have again taken centre stage in media and a crisis is imminent, if do we don't launch a spirited war.

Ugandans be assured that despite its complex nature and its excruciating ravages, the HIV/AIDS scourge can be rendered frail! News coming in from the XIX International AIDS Conference in Washington DC is encouraging! Well consonant with the theme for this year: "Turning the tide together", the UNAIDS Executive Director, Michel Sidibé, stressed the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in getting to zero regarding social transformation in the response, citing progress in the areas of HIV prevention, treatment, science, and investments, and reminded delegates thus: "We know how to get to Zero.

All that can stop us now is indecision and lack of courage." Indeed, these are the only blocks. Today we're all either infected or affected which is why we must stick together with rigor and commitment to eradicate HIV!

The U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said America is committed to creating an "AIDS-free generation" and that "the U.S. is working to build sustainable health systems that will help the world "finally win this fight; to invest, in Africa and elsewhere, in clinics that help slow mother-to-child transmissions."

This raises great hope from earlier fears that UNAIDS would cut funding as US President Barack Hussein Obama was quoted saying by the UNAIDS / WHO Report 2009 : "We're never going to have enough money to treat people who are simply getting infected." What does this mean? That Africans must take responsibility and work to eradicate HIV because continued support may not always be guaranteed. Secondly, we must cultivate a will and devote our efforts to end HIV infection.

The successes of the ABC strategy championed by H.E. Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and his wife, and all other movers won Uganda accolades. But reports now show Uganda, which was seen as a model in the HIV fight, is now losing it! HIV should be everybody's business at all times! Complacency caused rebounding of previously lowered prevalence. Once beaten twice shy: it's now not time to retreat or surrender; we've got to fight HIV like a heinous rebel if we must realise an HIV/AIDS Uganda.

I was skeptic about scientific interventions ending the over 30 years' scourge but proceedings from the Washington DC Conference, flash a ray of hope! Dr. Anthony Fauci said it was many "incremental steps" over more than 30 years that led to today's major advances against HIV/AIDS" but added that: "We want to get to the end of AIDS.

That will only occur with some fundamental foundations. And these foundations are basic and clinical research, which will give us the tools, which will ultimately lead to interventions and then ultimately these will need to be implemented together with studies about how best to implement them." Additionally and key to this is sound public health policy, leadership and political will.

Two things are sure: a complementary blend of behaviour change strategies and scientific interventions. Behavioural change largely advocates prevention while science digs deeper into the understanding of the HIV replication cycle and its sporadics, which serve as key guides in the treatment and prevention procedures.

People say the Government has not done enough or must do more. Yes, some government functionaries may have disappointed us, but what have you and I done in this fight? "If we can't cure, we can prevent it! All of us everywhere and all the time ought to make the fight against the HIV/AIDS scourge in Uganda and beyond our fight our business!"

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