

Participation of People Living with HIV key in Sustainable HIV Response

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Over the last two decades, Zimbabwe has made tremendous progress in halting and turning the tide on new HIV infections and AIDS related deaths. In fact, the country is etching towards epidemic control with people living with HIV knowing their status, being on ART and virally suppressed than any time in the national response to HIV. This has been achieved in part through the financial and technical support of development partners. As the HIV response moves towards epidemic control, donor fatigue is becoming apparent hence the call to serious think about sustaining the response beyond donor support.

“Global HIV funding landscape is flattening, and in some cases going down. Hence the need for sustainability planning with all strategic partners to develop a country led, measurable National HIV Sustainability Roadmap for Zimbabwe.”

Mr. Ngoni Chibukire, UNICEF

On the 13th of September 2023, the Zimbabwe National Network of People Living with HIV (ZNNP+) convened the National Meaningful Involvement of People Living with HIV (MIPA) Forum. People Living with HIV (PLHIV) representatives from all the country’s 10 provinces had the opportunity to discuss how the HIV response can attain sustainability in line with the agenda to end AIDS by 2030. The forum meeting, which was held at Fairmile Hotel in Gweru sought to engage PLHIV and proffer suggestions on how the country can adequately sustain the response. In his presentation, Mr. Ngoni Chibukire of the United Nations International Children’s Education Fund (UNICEF) Zimbabwe gave a progress update on efforts made to develop the HIV sustainability roadmap for Zimbabwe. He highlighted that there was considerable donor fatigue and that



Pic 1: Mr. Ngoni Chibukire of UNICEF Zimbabwe making a presentation on the sustainability road map for Zimbabwe.

there was urgent need to develop a clear roadmap to strengthen self-reliance and ensure that the gains made to date are maintained and interventions scaled up to end AIDS by 2030.

UNICEF Zimbabwe provided part funding for the National MIPA Forum as part of the consultative process spelt out in the sustainability road map and sought to build consensus among different sectors on the meaning and fundamental pillars of the strategy. The PLHIV representatives were afforded the opportunity to outline their expectations and provide guidance on the process. Representatives unanimously agreed that a concrete sustainability plan was critical to prevent the reversal of gains including the availability of treatment and care services in the country. It was noted that PLHIV stood to lose the most if



Pic 2: PLHIV representatives who attended the National MIPA Forum meeting supported by UNICEF Zimbabwe

development partners cut funding with no clear plan of action on the part of the country. This is considering the significant contribution that development partners make to the provision of prevention, treatment (including ART), and care services.

The PLHIV representatives re-affirmed the need to increase domestic financing for HIV, budget accountability, monitoring, expenditure tracking and strengthening human rights aspects and community engagement in the HIV response. This they said was a clear pathway to sustainability. The forum resolved to support the development of the sustainability road map with encouragement that communities including PLHIV be involved at all levels of the process. The forum also committed to feeding back to their respective communities.

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