

**Country Visit Report
Zambia: October 18 to 21, 2010**



Country Visit Report Zambia

To: Champions, Co-Sponsors and other Stakeholders
From: Champions Secretariat
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Summary

The Champions for an HIV-Free Generation visited Zambia from the 18th to 21st October 2010 at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Zambia, His Excellency Mr. Rupiah Banda. This was a regional mission to share experiences and encourage leadership to renew and revitalize the response to the HIV epidemic.

The delegation to Zambia was led by His Excellency, **Mr. Festus Mogae**, former president of the Republic of Botswana and chairman of the Champions. The other Champions who participated were His Excellency, **Dr. Kenneth Kaunda**, first president of the Republic of Zambia; **Dr. Speciosa Wandira**, former vice president of Uganda; and **Prof. Miriam Were**, former chairperson of the Kenya National AIDS Control Council and Laureate of the Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize.

The Champions held a series of meetings with critical audiences such as **His Excellency President Rupiah Banda**, Cabinet Ministers; Chief Justice and Supreme Court Judges, Speaker of the National Assembly, Chapter of Parliamentarians against HIV and AIDS, Royal Highnesses from the House of Chiefs, Heads of Development Partners and diplomatic missions, and leaders of civil society organizations.

The delegation had an opportunity to visit an integrated Male Circumcision and Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission site at Kafue District Hospital in the Kafue District currently serving as a model for other districts to learn from.

Trip Purpose and Champions' Issues

- To Champion for stronger, more visionary and outspoken leadership from the continent most affected by the epidemic through peer support.
- To Champion the social changes needed to achieve the vision of an HIV and AIDS free generation.
- To share ideas and personal experiences, for a revitalized regional response to HIV and AIDS.
- To gain exposure for Champions and their key issues through formal and informal contact with Zambia stakeholders, and through the media
- To network with development partners.

Champions' Major Issues

During the visit, the Champions emphasized several key issues based on earlier consultations with national authorities and in-country partners. The issues included:

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1. Leadership for HIV Testing and Testing (HCT)

The Champions raised concern that only 15% of the Zambian people knew their HIV status implying that the majority were missing out on the opportunity to access and utilize available HIV services. It was highlighted that the situation seriously compromises all other HIV response programmes including treatment and care. As a result, all universal access targets could just end up being an empty dream for the country.

Champions Recommendations

- Leadership of Zambia, at all levels to recognize the need to prioritize getting more people to know their HIV status so that they can make informed choices concerning their health.
- NAC to, in collaboration with in-country partners, establish a significant target for people to know their HIV status in line with the 2015 agenda. Such a target should also accommodate the need for an improved and intensified coverage of couple testing in view of the rising problem of HIV discordance in Zambia.
- Need for re-energized health and community systems strengthening including exploring innovative strategies such as mobile HCT services, youth friendly HCT services, adolescent friendly sexual and reproductive services, among others.

2. Leadership for Scaling Up Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission Services

The Champions also noted that as of 2009, an estimated 61% of pregnant women living with HIV received ARVs for preventing mother-to-child transmission. At this rate the country may not be able to virtually eliminate mother-to-child transmission by 2015.

Champions Recommendations

- Urged authorities to increase the uptake of PMTCT service to or near universal access target and reduce transmission rate significantly from the current 10%.

3. Leadership for Scaling Up Safe Male Circumcision

The Champions noted that male circumcision in Zambia remains low with only 13% (2007) of men aged 15-49 years reporting having been circumcised.

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Champions Recommendations

- Authorities to intensify efforts to upscale safe male circumcision including male newly borns through a well-defined implementation plan guided by well-articulated policies and advocacy and communication strategies.
- Authorities to strengthen its health systems by, among others, improving the infrastructure, providing additional human resources in partnership with the private sectors and the communities
- Authorities to work with traditional Male Circumcisers and unambiguously defining the role of traditional structures in the scale-up of male circumcision.
- Traditional leaders to dialogue with their counterparts in the region who were making significant strides in their chiefdoms to encourage the co-existence of cultural rituals and medical male circumcision as demonstrated by King Goodwill Zwelithini of the Zulu Nation and Kgosi Kgafela of the Bakgatla tribe in Botswana, to name a few.

4. Leadership for Eliminating Multiple Concurrent Partnerships (MCP)

Champions concurred that MCP has been identified as one of the key drivers of HIV transmission in Zambia and it accounted for 71% of all new infections.

Champions Recommendations

- National Leadership including the traditional and religious to intensively and actively campaign against multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships through social and behavioural change.

5. Leadership for Gender Empowerment

The Champions noted with concern that more women at 16.1% are living with HIV and AIDS compared to their male counterparts at 12.3%. Girls also continue to drop out of school to provide care and support in AIDS-affected family members.

Champions Recommendations

- Leadership to mainstream gender into the national response to balance the burden of HIV and AIDS and protect women and girls against sexual abuse and domestic violence.
- The draft Sexual Offences & Gender Violence Bill be urgently processed and enacted into law. This Bill will provide for a non-discriminatory treatment of sexual offences and domestic violence.

6. Leadership for Eliminating Stigma and Discrimination

Zambia does not have a law for protecting people living with HIV and AIDS including against stigmatization and discrimination.

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Champions Recommendations

- Leadership to formulate and endorse laws and policies that create a social environment that cares for people living with HIV and AIDS.
- The political leadership should take every opportunity to **speak out against stigma and discrimination.**
- Authorities to **discourage legislation that criminalizes** intentional HIV transmission as it could unintentionally undermine HIV prevention efforts with a result of increased stigma and discrimination.
- Education of legislators and members of the Judiciary to ensure that they are capacitated regarding issues of HIV prevention in the context of stigma and discrimination.

7. Leadership for Sustainability of the HIV Response

The Champions highlighted that in the fiscal year 2006, Zambia's domestic public funding contributed only 23.3% of the total actual AIDS spending compared to international sources accounting for the remaining 76.7%. It has also become increasingly difficult to track sources of funding and spending patterns across the multiple public and non-government stakeholders.

Champions Recommendations

- Development of a resource mobilization strategy as a matter of urgency to ensure the future sustainability of the response is monitored. It would be expected that this Strategy is target specific and time-bound. It should also include among other plans a resource tracking mechanism to guide allocation of financial resources across competing priorities.

Trip Outcomes and Follow-Up Issues

Outcomes

- The Champions had a successful visit in which all the planned meetings were held and issues deliberated on. It worth noting that despite the media being hysterical about the homosexual issue, the President of Zambia had a new understanding of the subject matter after the Champions had clearly articulated the issue from a prevention perspective.
- The joint launching of the Zambia National AIDS Strategic Framework 2011-2015 and the Champions Public Service Announcements for 2010 went a long way to foster the spirit of regional partnerships in the HIV response, a necessary ingredient in effectively addressing the response in Sub Saharan Africa.
- The Champions also met with the judiciary, an important partner in the HIV response that has not been actively involved the past considering their critical role in interpreting the law in the context of stigma and human rights.

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Follow-Up Issues

While many issues were discussed during the Champions mission to Zambia, a few specific areas for follow-up emerged. With the help from NAC and development partners the Champions' Secretariat will coordinate the tracking of progress on the following issues:

Leadership for HIV Testing and Testing (HCT)

- Establishing a significant target for “know your HIV status” campaign from the current 15% and progress towards achieving including coverage of couple testing in view of the rising problem of HIV discordance in Zambia.
- Re-energizing health and community systems strengthening including exploring innovative strategies such as mobile HCT services, youth friendly HCT services, adolescent friendly sexual and reproductive services, among others.

Leadership for Scaling Up Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission Services

- Increasing the uptake of PMTCT service from 61% to or near universal access target and reduce transmission rate significantly from the current 10%.

Leadership for Scaling Up Safe Male Circumcision

- Upscaling safe male circumcision from 13% including male newly borns through a well-defined implementation plan guided by well-articulated policies and advocacy and communication strategies.
- Health systems strengthening, by among others, improving the infrastructure, providing additional human resources in partnership with the private sectors and the communities.

Leadership for Eliminating Multiple and Concurrent Partnerships

- Partnering with traditional male circumcisers and unambiguously defining the role of traditional structures in the scale-up of male circumcision.
- Traditional leaders to dialogue with their counterparts in the region who were making significant strides in their chiefdoms to encourage the co-existence of cultural rituals and medical male circumcision.
- Leadership actively campaigning against multiple concurrent sexual partnerships at every opportunity.

Leadership for Gender Empowerment

- Mainstreaming gender into the national response to balance the burden of HIV and AIDS and to protect women and girls against sexual abuse and domestic violence.
- Finalization of the draft Sexual Offences & Gender Violence Bill into law.

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- Formulation and endorsement of laws and policies that create a social environment that cares for people living with HIV and AIDS.

Leadership for Eliminating Stigma and Discrimination

- Political leadership taking every opportunity to **speak out against stigma and discrimination.**
- **Discouragement of legislation that criminalizes** intentional HIV transmission.
- Education of legislators and members of the Judiciary to ensure that they are capacitated regarding issues of HIV prevention in the context of stigma and discrimination.

Leadership for Sustainability of the HIV Response

- Development and implementation of a national resource tracking mechanism across the entire spectrum of the national response.
- Development of an innovative sustainability plan to enable Zambia to reduce dependence on foreign donors.

Trip Agenda and Meeting Summaries

The remainder of the report is a summary of the minutes from each of the Champions' meetings in Zambia.

Main Participants

Champions	H.E. Festus Mogae H.E. Kenneth Kaunda Dr. Speciosa Wandira Prof. Miriam Were
Secretariat	Batho Chris Molomo – Executive Secretary Oliver Murima – Program Manager Mokhamokha Mohale –Strategic Information Specialist Rebecca Aaku – Office Manager
Host Organizers	National AIDS Council (NAC) Ben Chirwa– Director General Justin Mwiinga – Donor Coordinator and Public Relations Manager
Development Partners	Amaya Gillespie, UNAIDS Country Coordinator Kristie Mikus, PEPFAR Country Coordinator

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Meeting Summaries

Monday 18th October 2010

The Champions arrived from various countries and were met at the airport by His Excellency Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, government officials and the Champions Secretariat.

Champions Debrief

The Champions' first port call was the National AIDS Council where they were welcomed by the NAC Chairman Bishop Banda. The Champions were given an update on the state of the national response in Zambia by the NAC Director General, Mr Ben Chirwa. The Executive Secretary, Mr. Christopher Molomo then took the meeting through the issues the Champions were going to advocate for in Zambia. The issues discussed were arrived at after thorough consultations with in the country.

Tuesday 19th October 2010

I. Courtesy Call on His Excellency, the President of Zambia, Mr. Rupiah Banda.



The Champions visited State House to pay a courtesy call on the President of Zambia, Mr Rupiah Banda. The aim of the courtesy call was to thank the President for his invitation and to explain why the Champions were in the Zambia and their expectations.

The Champions Chairman, H.E. Festus Mogae started by congratulating Zambia for passing the national AIDS bill through which Zambia established the National AIDS Council, as way back as 2002, and for having declared HIV and AIDS a national emergency in 2004. He went on to give an overview of the issues the Champions had come to advocate.

In his remarks, H.E. Mogae argued that stigma was the greatest enemy of prevention of new HIV infection. He further argued that “stigma whether directed at sex

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workers, homosexuals or any other minority group means these people may go into hiding and refrain from requesting support or treatment. Which can only mean that those infected will continue to transmit the virus to others, while at the same time denying themselves access to services that could prolong and improve the quality of their lives". "In the fight against HIV/AIDS, all must be treated equally, even when we are at a variance with their lifestyle or sexual preferences" he said.

In response to the remarks by Champions Chairman, President Banda thanked the Champions for clearly explaining their advocacy work in Sub Saharan Africa as they focus on prevention. He also had the following to say concerning homosexuality, "Up until now, I did not understand why we should tolerate homosexuality. So it has been difficult to think whether we should have laws or not to criminalize homosexuality in our society. But having heard from you Champions and looking at your position I can understand why first we should not criminalize them."

II. Media Briefing at Parliament new wing



After meeting with the President of Zambia, the Champions proceeded to Parliament where they met with the media for a press briefing. The Champions Chairman H.E. Mogae, opened by explaining that "The Champions" were a group of former presidents and eminent persons from sub-Saharan Africa who were using their privileged positions and experience to

champion the fight against HIV/AIDS, with the top leadership in the various African countries.

He went on to explain that although AIDS is a global problem it is worse in Sub-Saharan Africa and more so in Southern Africa, which is the epicenter of the epidemic. He was however quick to point out that the good news was that AIDS was no longer the killer disease that it was perceived to be in the past. He further explained that people can now live productively for more than 20 years with the virus. He said it was also good news that every country in the region had programmes to diagnose and treat the disease.

H.E. Mogae highlighted that, the not so good news was that despite vigorous programmes to diagnose and treat the disease, new infections were being recorded

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on a daily basis at an alarming rate. He further argued that this is why the primary objective of the Champions initiative **emphasizes prevention of new infections as priority number 1, number 2 and number 3.**

H.E. Mogae told the media that the goal of the champions is to ensure that there were no new infections of HIV, from any source by 2015, the Champions were advocating halting of new infections by focusing on the following strategies:

Behaviour Change

Evidenced based examination of traditional norms and practices which facilitate the spread of the virus, including the practice **of multiple and concurrent sexual partners.** He argued that “In our African tradition men can have more than one wife, or indeed have one wife and many concubines and satellite houses”. The message from the Champions is that this is risky behaviour as infection from any source in this setting could lead to infection of all. Therefore the Champions message was that men must reduce sexual partners, and if that is not possible must ensure that all use condoms.

Alcohol Abuse

H.E. Mogae explained that alcohol abuse must be examined in the light of the new threat from HIV/AIDS. Evidence shows that alcohol impairs judgment and coordination, leading to risky behaviour and improper use of the condoms.

Male Circumcision

H.E. Mogae urged Zambians to advocate for Male Circumcision, even for adult men, as this had been scientifically proven to reduce by 60% the rate of contracting HIV virus from the female partner. He however reiterated that male circumcision alone does not provide 100% guarantee and therefore must be blended with other prevention tools in addressing the HIV epidemic.

PMTCT

The Champions Chairman explained that though many African countries had scored successes in the prevention of Mother to Child Transmission, the objective was to achieve **ZERO transmission from mother to child by 2015.**

Stigma and Discrimination

H.E. Mogae explained that while in Africa HIV/AIDS, was primarily a heterosexual disease, this was not the only mode of transmission. In order to ensure that there were no new infections by 2015, people with different sexual life styles and preferences had to be brought on board. This included homosexuals and sex workers. He said these two groups of people could pose a threat to halting new infections unless they were brought into the mainstream of treatment and advocacy. The Champions Chairman explained that he was not advocating for the promotion of homosexual lifestyles or its legalization, but he was promoting the closure of all taps

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on the infection, including the homosexual one, as these could pose a threat to others in society. He said that sex workers must be recipients of the same treatment and information as others in society. "Stigma prevents people from seeking help and drives the disease underground, where it cannot be reached." This is counterproductive.

Complacency

H.E. Mogae urged Zambians to watch out for complacency because the fight is still not been won despite the level of achievements this far.

Questions from the Media

Mr. Chris Mfula of the BBC wanted to know whether the Champions felt homosexuality should be legalized.

The Champions Chairman responded by saying that their visit was not to advocate for legalization or the lack of homosexuality but to ensure that all drivers of the pandemic were dealt with in the same way, regardless of whether they came from heterosexual contacts, contacts with sex workers or contacts with homosexuals.

III. Meeting with Speaker of National Assembly and Social Committee and Chapter of Parliamentarians Against HIV and AIDS

The Clerk of the National Assembly Honourable Amusaa K. Mwanamwambwa welcomed the Champions. In his opening remarks, he stated that he was confident that the Champions would succeed in their present fight against HIV/AIDS, because they had proven track records in the political, economic and social struggles of their individual countries. Hon. Mwanamwambwa said that no Member of Parliament had been spared from the devastating effects of the pandemic, which necessitated the development of an HIV/AIDS Work place Policy and other interventions.

Honourable Mwanamwambwa further explained that despite some reduction in the number of deaths and illnesses arising from HIV infection in recent years, the National Assembly had intensified measures that it had put in place to deal with the disease. He added that, not only was Parliament part of Government's multi sectoral approach to HIV, but it has also set up a Committee on Health, Community Development and Social Welfare, to deal with issues relating the disease. The work of this Committee feeds into the International and Regional bodies such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Southern Africa Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF).

The Honourable Speaker also mentioned that Members of Parliament have also formed a Coalition of African Parliamentarians against HIV/AIDS (CAPAH), Zambia Chapter, which is a voluntary body open to all Members of Parliament. One of the issues that Coalition has taken on is to advocate for more treatment sites of people

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in need of anti-retroviral therapy (ART), particularly in rural areas, and the introduction of more recreation facilities, especially for young people in the rural constituencies, as an HIV prevention strategy.

In addition the National Assembly also has an HIV/AIDS workplace Committee, which trains peer educators and psycho-social counselors. The policy ensures that ARV's are provided, opportunistic infections treated and prevention programmes, including talks and video shows intensified.

Honourable Imenda spoke on behalf of the Parliamentarians highlighting the fact that the Committee on Health, Community Development and Social Welfare was spearheading research into the role of traditional medicine in the management of HIV/AIDS in Zambia. The Committee was also doing a performance review of Government policy on HIV/AIDS. Hon. Imenda also informed the Champions that Parliament has launched a "Caucus on Children" , which ensures that national institutions place children as a priority of Government's political and development agenda, including the special needs and concerns of children relating to HIV/AIDS. Hon Imenda acknowledged the coming of the Champions was indeed a shot in the arm to the Parliamentarians' fight against the pandemic.

Professor Were, in her address to the Parliamentarians urged leaders to be cognizant of traditional practices that hinder the fight against HIV/AIDS. She emphasized the need for all traditional practices to be evaluated on the basis of, whether the practice is helpful, dangerous or neutral. She said Parliamentarians as people who were close to their constituencies particularly in rural areas, had the ability to influence the required behavior change. She pointed out that alcohol abuse was rampant in our communities, leading to risky behaviours. She urged the abolition of traditional practice of **multiple concurrent partnerships** and where it was not possible she encouraged that the use of condoms be promoted.

Dr. Wandira, urged Parliamentarians to use their influence to effect positive behaviour change through prompt legislative processes. She advocated the upscaling of **male circumcision** as an HIV prevention strategy. She cited an example that if a high ranking official like the Speaker of the House, were to be circumcised and make this information public, it would give impetus to the circumcision campaign and many are likely to follow suit.

IV. Development Partners Luncheon

The Champions interacted with development partners and members of diplomatic missions present in Zambia during a two hour luncheon hosted by the US Ambassador to Zambia.

In his welcoming remarks, the US Ambassador, His Excellency Mark, Charles Storella thanked the Champions for coming up with this high level and unique HIV

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prevention advocacy initiative. The Ambassador informed the gathering that being a Champion required courage and that the courage shown by the Champions in bringing to light, matters around HIV prevention that were perceived uncomfortable by countries' top leadership, has indeed given Development Partners, the courage to persevere. The Ambassador concluded by emphasizing the importance of taking a leading role in trying to realize the '50 by 15' goal by the Zambian people.

The Champions Chairman, His Excellency. Mogae started by expressing his appreciation to the American Ambassador for hosting the Ambassadors and Development Partners' Luncheon. He went on to praise the in-country Development Partners for the great work they are doing in Zambia. His Excellency Mogae however, advised Development Partners to guard against becoming complacent in providing funding and technical support as a lot still needed to be done in addressing the HIV response in Sub Saharan Africa. The Champions Chairman explained that the Champions were on a regional mission to encourage leadership in sub-Saharan Africa, to keep HIV prevention on the national agenda. He reiterated that prevention is the only way to achieve sustainability of the response towards an HIV free generation. Mr Mogae further argued that there is a lot that Zambians and Development Partners can learn from each other and that it is only through partnership and mutual understanding that Zambia can achieve zero new infections by 2015.

Meeting with Chief Justice and Supreme Court Judges



Chief Justice Sakala welcomed the Champions and introduced the Members of the Bench after which he requested the Champions to address members of the bench.

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The Champions Chairman, Mr. Mogae, began by informing the meeting that Champions were concerned by the continuing challenge of HIV/AIDS in the region particularly that there were new infections every day. He said that this was in line the Abuja declaration of 2001 where leaders pledged to use best endeavours to ensure that there are no new infections by 2015.

H.E. Mogae said the Champions agenda was to focus on HIV prevention because it is the most cost-effective long term solution, especially in view of donor fatigue that is beginning to set in. He added that prevention entails a whole range of issues but particularly behaviour change, which must start with our leaders as examples. Politicians, legislators, traditional leaders and faith based leaders; all must play their role in encouraging and effecting behavior change.

Chief Justice Sakala, in his remarks explained that the Bench felt privileged to receive Champions and to interact with them over issues of HIV/AIDS. He said the Bench had concerns in dealing HIV/AIDS related cases:

- There were no precedents to guide their judgments which meant that quite often the courts relied on their own interpretation of the law, which could possibly worsen the problem.
- The adjudication of HIV related cases should adopt a human rights approach because HIV infection exposes one to potential violation of basic human rights.
- Where to place customary law practices such as property rights and inheritance, widow/widower cleansing in the light of the pandemic.
- Challenge of being able to distinguish the circumstances when HIV should be treated as an aggravating or mitigating factor when considering appropriate sentences or the granting of bail.
- Increase in the number of sexual offences such as rape, defilement, despite the prevalence of HIV infection and the introduction of stiff penalties for such offences.

Chief Justice Sakala explained that due to the many staff members succumbing to the disease, and diminished hours due to illness from opportunistic infections, the Judiciary had developed a Work Place Programme that has been endorsed by staff and adjudicators alike. Some of the achievements of this work place Programme had been the reduction in stigma and increased use of VCT services.

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Chief Justice Sakala also informed the Champions that the Judiciary has in collaboration with other partners such as SHARE, produced HIV/AIDS Reference Materials which have been distributed throughout the country.

Professor Were during her contributions emphasized, the need to evaluate some traditions in the light of present day events, in this case HIV/AIDS. She reiterated the need to question whether all the traditions are helpful or not, in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Multiple concurrent partners, alcohol abuse and violence against women need to be re-visited.

Dr. Wandira, expressed hope that the judiciary would make informed decisions, in the light of evidence that is now available concerning the fight against HIV/AIDS. She said that circumcision had been shown to reduce the rate of transmission of the virus and must therefore be encouraged. Judgments that touch on stigma in the workplace would help to fight stigma and encourage openness on matters relating to HIV.

Chief Justice Sakala asked the Champions if they would advocate for compulsory circumcision in view of its importance in the fight against HIV/AIDS infection.

The Champions Chairman, H.E. Mogae responded in the negative. He argued that the Champions strongly believe in advocating for circumcision through convincing and carrying the people on this issue. Making it compulsory through law would not help. He further explained that criminalizing transmission was counterproductive because it would mean that being HIV positive is an offence, which would in turn mean that people would not come forward to seek services driving the epidemic underground.

V. Recording of the Champions Television Program

The Champions were invited to an hour long special interview at the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) studios. The Champions' interview was broadcast on public television the following day Wednesday 20th October 2010. A DVD was also produced and is available at the Champions Secretariat with a detailed footage of the interview. Several issues were discussed during the interview and below are responses from the Champions regarding how they became involved in the initiative.

The Champions Chairman, H.E. Mogae explained that he became involved in HIV and AIDS issues when he was still the President of Botswana. Botswana was at the time, one of the countries seriously affected by the epidemic. He highlighted that he was the first African president to report at the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Meeting in 2000 that his country would not have faced any problems in meeting the MDG targets had it not been for HIV decimating the population. His Excellency President Mogae acknowledged that the human development indices

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such as maternal morbidity, infant mortality, life expectancy just to mention a few, were deteriorating because of AIDS and at unacceptable levels in Botswana. He further informed that Botswana was one of the first countries to introduce ARVs, treatment and care, and PMTCT. He concluded by highlighting that, although great strides have been made in addressing the epidemic, the virus was still there and many people were still living with it and therefore he will continue to be engaged with AIDS work until total prevention is achieved.

Dr. Kaunda explained that the AIDS problem attacked the continent of Africa when he was still the president of Zambia. He further narrated that one his sons also got infected by the virus. The first family asked the son living in Ndola with his family to come live with them at State House. By taking the son in, the first family wanted to lead by example in showing how stigma could be fought at family level. He went to explain that after two weeks the son died, but that did not deter them from continuing to fight stigma and as a result they called for a press conference to announce that their son had died of AIDS. Many people were not happy that we had taken such a bold move, but we vowed to continue doing whatever was within our power to address the HIV response thereafter.

Professor Were explained that she was motivated by the desire to help parents to have healthy children through good delivery services particularly those in rural areas. Things were going on well in that regard until the advent of the epidemic which did not only result in children dying but also their mothers and fathers. She in conclusion, explained that she had to join the HIV war to defend what she had toiled for over her entire life i.e. to ensure parents had healthy babies.

Dr. Wandira explained that she got involved in the HIV and AIDS as early in 1979 as a Clinician when patients came with this new condition which very little was known about then. Later on she joined politics where she took the role of explaining what this disease was all about to fellow politicians. She highlighted that she lost a grandson at the age of 25 and has relatives living with HIV and AIDS who have also gone public with their status. She concluded by saying that her experiences with the epidemic as a politician, professional, mother, relative and sister will go a long way in creating an impact in the Champions for an HIV Free Generation initiative.

Wednesday 20th October 2010

VI. Meeting with Cabinet Committee on HIV/AIDS (NAC Boardroom)

Bishop Banda welcomed the Champions and the Cabinet Ministers who were present in the meeting. Bishop Banda explained that the Cabinet Committee on HIV/AIDS provided policy guidelines for the National AIDS Council and Government. The Committee is chaired by the Minister of Health who was represented at the meeting by the Minister of Finance, Hon. Dr. Situmbeko Musokotwane.

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Dr. Musokotwane advised the Champions that the fact that Zambia had a committee of ministers to deal with the pertinent issue of HIV/AIDS was a demonstration of the highest political will that Zambia attaches to the fight against HIV/AIDS. The fact that the committee also reported directly to the President was further evidence of the seriousness attached to it.

The Minister said as a member of a committee guiding policy development at a national level, he was happy to report some successes in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Zambia. These included the review of the ART eligibility criteria from CD4 200 to CD4 350, increase condom supply, implementation of safe blood policy procedures at all hospitals and clinics and roll-out of intensified PMTCT programs at the district level. He also reported that following the Zambia HIV Prevention Convention in 2009, Government produced a prevention strategy which includes a systematic response to new infections. The Minister appealed to donors however not to become reluctant to fund HIV Prevention and treatment programs in Zambia and in the region.

The Chairman of the Champions applauded Zambia for its gallant efforts thus far, but cautioned against fatigue on the part of the leadership regarding up scaling of HIV prevention methods such as male circumcision. He also warned that the Committee had a crucial role to play in, above all, ensuring that the population does not become complacent. "We as African leaders have to persevere to ensure HIV prevention is priority number 1, priority number 2 and priority number 3 across all sectors in our countries. We must commit to fight until the battle is won", he said.

Dr. Wandira urged the Zambian leadership, to invest in research that would guide the effective application of scarce resources against the back drop of the current economic crisis in donor countries. She further requested the Ministers present to get circumcised, and declare it publicly so as to encourage the male population at large to also do the same.

VII. Meeting with Traditional Leaders (House of Chiefs Auditorium)



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The Chairman of the House of Chiefs, Chief Mazimawe highlighted that he was glad that chiefs and their chiefdoms had now been brought into the mainstream of the fight against HIV and AIDS as this was not the case a few years back. He believed that this was a major step as most Zambians reside in the rural areas. He said the House of Chiefs had agreed to discourage or abolish negative cultural practices that contribute to the spread of HIV such as sexual cleansing, spouse inheritance and wife or husband swapping. He also encouraged his fellow leaders to take advantage of the annual traditional ceremonies to sensitize their people on behavioral change.

Professor Were emphasized the need for traditional leaders coming together as experts on Zambian traditions and norms and evaluate the current traditional practices to determine whether they were helpful or not. She urged them to proceed to eradicate those that were found harmful by educating the tribes on their dangers. In addition, she requested these practices to be evaluated against available scientific evidence. She gave examples of how she in Kenya dealt with the tradition of applying cow dung on the umbilical cord of new born babies that exposed them to the risk of Tetanus resulting in death. She challenged them to try the available scientific knowledge of using sterile strings to control bleeding for a period. She explained that during this trial period, no child died of Tetanus. The practice of applying cow dung was thus eventually abolished.

Chieftaness Nkomeshya Mukomambo II of Lusaka District informed the Champions that the Foundation of Royal Highnesses in Zambia decided, in 2002, to join the fight against HIV and AIDS, even though at the time they were not viewed as key players in the fight against the disease. She argued that it was important for Chiefs to lead by example, by participating in voluntary counseling and testing and getting as much information as possible about the prevention of HIV. She concluded by calling for increased financial resource allocation to Chiefdoms, so that they can intensify the fight against the epidemic at the grass roots level.

Chief Mukuni from the Southern Province stressed that the fight against the virus has to be led by the Chiefs. He told the meeting that in his Chiefdom he openly encourages the use of condoms. "Though I am a Catholic and my religious views have been compromised due to my push for the use of condoms, but in this age HIV and AIDS we have to put our personal views aside and protect our people. As a Chief, I am committed to fight every war that threatens my people, and this is a war. Thank you Champions for engaging us, as we have never had a chance to hear from such eminent personalities on how you are fighting this war in your countries, I will fight harder in my Chiefdom."

Dr. Wandira, urged the Royal Highnesses to use their leadership positions to advocate for the needed change. She explained that politicians often encountered problems as they try to advocate for desired change because the electorate can

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decide not to listen to them if they express views they did not like. But because traditional Chiefs were not elected, they always commanded the respect of their subjects, and can influence behavioral change through their own lives and the messages they send to their subjects.

VIII. Meeting with Civil Society (Intercontinental Hotel)

The Champions had lunch with leaders of Civil Society organizations before participating in a two hour meeting session.

Mr Felix Mwanza, of the Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS presented the issues on behalf of civil society. One of the major issues raised was rights based touching on the legal and policy environment surrounding the minority groups and most at risk populations. He argued that the penal code criminalized most of the behaviours that these minority groups including sex workers, homosexuals and injection drug users are involved in. The Champions were requested to lobby the Government to reconcile policy and legal provisions so that they respect human rights and they do not discriminate or stigmatize.

Mr. Mwanza also informed the Champions that there was dire need for third line ART drugs in Zambia. As most people already on ART do not have access to third line treatment. He concluded with an appeal to the Champions to advocate for the introduction of comprehensive sexuality education as part of the curriculum in schools as lack of this education places young people at risk to HIV infection.

The Champions Chairman H.E. Mogae said the Champions have had meetings with the leadership and urged them to review policies and laws that discriminate or stigmatize minority groups. The Champions have also urged Government to work hard to enact into law the Sexual Offences and Gender Violence Bill which has been in draft for a while. This Bill would safe guard the rights of all at risk populations and PLWHA.

His Excellence Former President Kaunda also advised that he would continue to appeal to all Zambians, leaders, young people, faith based organizations and others to treat each other with compassion remembering always to “do unto others what you want them to do unto you”.

Dr. Wandira highlighted that the issue of access to drugs is a problem in many African countries, not just Zambia, and it is a problem that relates to all essential drugs not just ART. This is primarily because Africa has still not found an effective way of sharing the cost burden of the disease with its citizens. She said Africa had to come up with innovative financial products now in every country to support the

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health systems because it is doubtful that many countries in the region, given our levels of economic growth will be able to sustain the burden as it is. She said the Champions are committed to help Governments find ways of sustaining their health systems. She said they would engage relevant regional stakeholders and come up with ideas which would be discussed and debated by national leadership before next steps can be taken. She encouraged civil society leaders to continually capacitate themselves with information on issues concerning HIV and AIDS, in Zambia and internationally, so as to cement their credibility, as crucial change agents in the national response.

Launch of the 2011-2015 Zambia National AIDS Strategic Framework and Launch of the Champions Public Service Announcements

The President of Zambia Mr. Rupiah Banda, represented by the Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services, Honorable Ronnie Shikapwasha, hosted a reception in honour of the Champions at Intercontinental Hotel in Lusaka. In his NASF launch remarks, Hon. Shikapwasha said Zambia's HIV situation was a tenacious one and the most serious threat to the country's development agenda. He added that the country was determined to keep moving forward to fight the epidemic which was why Government, in collaboration, with its partners and donors had come up with the National HIV and AIDS strategic framework whose theme was "Towards Improving the Quality of Life of the Zambian People". He explained that the framework will be implemented from 2011 – 2015 with a sole mandate of increasing efforts to reduce the rate of new HIV infections by 50% by adopting a multi sectoral approach.

During the launch of the Champions PSAs launch, H.E. Mogae said the Champions were privileged to be part of the launch of Zambia's strategic framework for HIV/AIDS. He said Southern Africa had to ensure that HIV prevention was priority number 1, priority number 2, and priority number 3. To this end, the Champions had partnered with Soul City to develop a set of Public Service Announcements which would be broadcast in 11 Southern African countries on both radio and television, with the hope that they would influence and encourage behavioral change in the region.

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IX. Field visit to Kafue District Hospital



The field visit to Kafue District hospital was coordinated with assistance from the Society for Family Health and the Hospital Committee. The Champions were given a tour of the facility which is evidence of the scale up of HIV preventative measures, such as MC and administration of PMTCT therapy, in the district.



**Communiqué of the Champions for an HIV-Free
Generation**

**CHAMPIONS
FOR AN HIV-FREE
GENERATION**

We, the Champions for an HIV-Free Generation, visited the Republic of Zambia from October 19 to 21, 2010, on a regional mission to share experiences and advocate for renewed and revitalized responses to the HIV epidemic. We came to exchange views with government, traditional and civil society leaders on what can be done to stop the spread of HIV, and to reach out to our peers to find solutions together.

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Our mission was led by the chairperson of the Champions, His Excellency, Mr. Festus Mogae, former president of the Republic of Botswana, His Excellency, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, first president of Zambia; Her Excellency Dr. Speciosa Wandira, former vice president of Uganda; and Professor. Miriam Were, former chairperson of the Kenya National AIDS Control Council and Laureate, Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize for Medical Services.

We wish to express our sincere gratitude to His Excellency President Rupiah Banda, and the people of Zambia for hosting us and facilitating this interaction. The intensive interactions we had with the national leadership and the support we received from the people of Zambia were unparalleled.

The Champions congratulate the leadership in Zambia for enacting an AIDS law, through which Zambia established the National AIDS Council. This has allowed Government to fully commit national resources to the response against HIV and AIDS.

Zambia is experiencing 5 new infections for every 2 people on treatment. Indeed, it is clear that the treatment response is likely to be unsustainable in the long term. The Champions therefore call on the leadership to accelerate and intensify evidence-guided prevention in order to turn-off the tap of new infections. This is the only way to achieve sustainability.

We wish to urge the leadership in Zambia to recognize that more people need to know their HIV status so that they can make informed choices in adopting key prevention behaviours. This calls for re-energized health and community systems strengthening

We urge the national leadership to continue to include the traditional and religious leaders to intensively and actively campaign against multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships through social and behavioral change.

We recommend that PMTCT be scaled up urgently.

The Champions encourage the leadership to intensify efforts to upscale safe male circumcision guided by well-articulated policies and advocacy and communication strategies. In view of the need to co-operate with traditional male circumcisers, part of the strategy will be to unambiguously define the role of traditional structures in the scale-up of male circumcision.

Greater involvement from all of our leaders is critical. Public statements around the scale-up of HIV prevention during community gatherings would have a great impact

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at the community level. Speaking loudly and publicly at every opportunity is one of the most important HIV prevention tools.

The Champions stress the importance of addressing stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV. Our leaders should take every opportunity to speak out against stigma and endorse laws and policies that create a social environment that cares for people living with HIV.

The Champions wish to extend a special note of gratitude to all Zambians including development partners, civil society and the media for their support.

During our three-day mission, we met many Zambian “Champions” who work hard every day in this struggle against HIV and AIDS and we commend them. On behalf of all the Champions for an HIV-Free Generation, thank you.

Chairman, Champions for an HIV-Free Generation.

Lusaka, Zambia
October 20, 2010