

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER HEARING FOR THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON HIV AND AIDS. 23 APRIL 2021

INTERVENTION BY REV JANE N. NG'ANG'A. NETWORK OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS LIVING WITH OR PERSONALLY AFFECTED BY HIV AND AIDS (INERELA+ KENYA)

FAITH COMMUNITIES – A KEY ASSET TO ADDRESS KEY GAPS AND BRINGING ABOUT CHANGE PANEL 4 – 23 APRIL 2021

My name is Rev. Jane Ng'ang'a representing the Interfaith Health Platform and the Network of Religious Leaders Living with and Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS.

We welcome the recognition of FBOs and faith communities to address key gaps and bringing about change;

- We can better address key gaps in the HIV response when we collaborate with and among different sectors;

Interfaith advocacy, Faith community leadership and work on HIV is key in difficult operating environments in challenging operating environments. It has proven to be effective in my country, Kenya. Indeed, a large percentage of people in high burden countries attend places of worship at least once per week giving faith communities a wide reach.

- In Kenya 97 % of people attend religious services weekly.

My network - INERELA+ - recognizes the importance of working with faith leaders from various faith traditions to address key gaps such as stigma and discrimination; sexual and gender-based violence; support adolescents; and promote greater access to HIV services to children;

- In Kenya – The Faith Sector WG is part of the governmental HIV response. This guarantees a better coordination;
- Working with faith leaders to share HIV prevention information, and increase testing and treatment among men has proven to be a key asset (ex FCI Kenya)

Religion and spirituality play a key role in nearly every community in Africa.

Decades of public health programs have shown that effective delivering of health messaging and resources into communities can be achieved through the involvement of community members and through community leadership.

When key community members advocate, plan and implement – our interventions are not only more effective, but also much more sustainable -

As we all look to an effective HIV response, the Political Declaration must commit to build synergies and address critical gaps, by:

1. Investing in HIV programmes and interventions that bring together people living with HIV, key priority population groups, faith leaders, the government and other stakeholders;
2. Engaging in collaborative platforms, such as the Vatican Initiative, to accelerate the research, development, introduction, roll out and uptake of optimal diagnostics and treatment for all.
3. Faith Groups call upon UNAIDS and all other relevant stakeholders to put in place a consultative process to develop, by the end of 2021, a framework to eliminate vertical transmission of HIV, and end AIDS in children by 2030, building on the success of the Global Plan and the Start Free Stay Free AIDS Free framework.

Thank you for the opportunity



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