

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FORUM 2000

AIDS: THE GREATEST LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

Daily Report for December 6, 2000

This report covers the Plenary Session on 6th December, highlights from Breakout sessions on 6th December as well as highlights from Breakout sessions held on 5th December and not reported in the 5th December Daily Summary Report.

The main themes on December 6th were Leadership Actions Required; Towards a more effective leadership response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and Scaling up the International Partnership Against AIDS in Africa.

Main Plenary Report

Leadership Actions Required

Chair: Dr. Mamphela Ramphele

Main Thesis of the Session

The need to address the epidemic in a war-like fashion through acceleration of the response to HIV/AIDS, the mobilization of all key actors at national and international levels. It is essential to develop a true partnership with all stakeholders, especially communities, families and individuals, who must be empowered to deal with the HIV/AIDS issues. It is therefore imperative that institutions adopt a complete different approach to the HIV/AIDS problem in terms of behavioral and institutional change.

Main Conclusions:

The fight against HIV/AIDS should benefit from conventional war experiences. Communities are very much aware of the way to approach the epidemic and should be given the opportunity to do so.

Traditional and non-traditional approaches should be adopted to mobilize funds and governments should budget internal resources to fight the epidemic.

There is a need for the international community to adjust their policies to address this war-like situation.

An appeal was made to the World Bank to examine the ethical and moral implications of loan for AIDS and several speakers called for debt cancellation and the conversion of loans to grants.

Governments are urged to establish funding mechanisms to facilitate the transfer of funds to the communities.

The importance of the international partnership against AIDS at country level was emphasized and the following implementation issues were highlighted: Community participation, information sharing, capacity building of PLWHA, women and communities to ensure sustainability, care and support including drug access for PLWHA, scaling up Best Practice.

Main Topics and key points

The need to move from rhetoric to action which should be in density and scale. All stakeholders were encouraged to intensify their response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic as we cannot continue to do business as usual. Commitment and dedication will lead to success. In this technological age the “www” should stand for “we will win.”

Considerable progress has been made at national, and international levels since the introduction of the International Partnership against HIV/AIDS in January 1999. The main achievements at international levels include: High level political Mobilization. For example the issue of AIDS was raised at the level of the Security Council and the Secretary General launched the partnership in September 1999. There has also been an increase in resource mobilization from the stakeholders at international level.

At national level the International Partnership against HIV/AIDS has resulted in increased political will and commitment, improved strategic plans, decentralization of the national response to district and community levels, increased resource mobilization including innovative ways of raising funds. (debt relief, HIPIC). There is however still room for improvement particularly when it comes to implementation of the strategic plan and disbursement of funds to the communities.

There were several statements regarding resource mobilization: Appeal for increased support from the international community to adequately address the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The Bank was commended for its efforts in introducing “IDA” but was requested to adopt a more humanitarian, ethical approach to the HIV/AIDS problem by converting the loans for AIDS into grants for AIDS.

Most forceful/interesting quotes

“In this age of information technology, let www be our driving force. If we are committed and dedicated, WWW we will win!!!” Kenneth Kaunda

“Loan would have been acceptable without AIDS but is not acceptable in a World with AIDS” Micheal Kelly.

“The Youth is angry about poverty, debt, corruption and social injustice.” Genevieve – Global Youth Connection.

Highlights from Breakout sessions on 6th December

Access to Care and Treatment

Access to care and treatment is crucial in the fight against HIV/AIDS, not only because it is a basic human right, but also because we cannot encourage people to break the silence without offering them treatment and care in return. While some countries are further ahead than others, it is clear that we need better care and treatment across the continent. This means improving health infrastructures and all aspects of community care, including training for medical professionals and careers. It also requires a drastic reduction in the price of the full range of drugs which have been developed to combat HIV and the opportunistic infections of AIDS. Lower prices and better delivery systems need to be pursued simultaneously, and immediately.

Highlights from Breakout sessions on 5th December

Leadership Role of Government in Social Mobilization

The breakout session assessed the role of the government in the mobilization against AIDS. It was agreed that the role of government is irreplaceable in the fight against AIDS. The role of African governments is the following :

- Creation and implementation of AIDS programs
- Coordination of all actors in the fight against AIDS
- Mobilization of all resources required for programs fighting AIDS
- Dissemination of information
- Facilitation of access to medication

Thus far, government efforts have not achieved necessary results. The following conclusions were made:

- Weak performance of national programs against AIDS
- Poor mobilization of financial and human resources
- Underutilization of PLWA

It was recommended that urgent measures should be taken to make medication easily accessible to PLWA. In addition, information campaigns must be increased.