



International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa

MEANINGFULLY ENGAGE COMMUNITIES TO ACHIEVE AN END TO AIDS

1 December, 2019 – Kampala.

The International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS Eastern Africa (ICWEA) joins the rest of the world to commemorate World AIDS Day, 2019 under the theme “Communities make a Difference”.

ICWEA believes that an end to AIDS by 2030 is very possible when everyone acknowledges and engages the communities in all our diversity as important stakeholders in decision-making at all levels.

ICWEA pledges to continue the fight against gender inequalities and preventing new HIV infections by giving girls and women living with HIV visibility and addressing issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights for women which we believe are at the heart of the HIV epidemic.

ICWEA celebrates the girls and women living with HIV who have played tremendous roles in preventing new HIV infections through Treatment as

Prevention strategy including elimination of mother to child transmission of HIV).

However, there are still obstacles that are faced by girls and women living with HIV in the struggle to achieve an end to AIDS by 2030.

These include tokenistic engagement of girls and women living with HIV in decision making, weak community system, and dwindling resources for women-led organizations/ networks, HIV related stigma, discrimination, and criminalization.

We take this opportunity to call upon:

1. Governments to review and amend sections in the existing policies and laws that fuel stigma, discrimination and criminalization on the basis of HIV status.

2. Donors to invest resources in strengthening community system and women's movement that play critical role in addressing harmful cultural practices and norms which increase vulnerability to HIV infections but also create obstacles to accessing available services.

3. All stakeholders to meaningfully engage the girls and women living with HIV in health decision-making so that their perspectives are considered.