



Organisation of African First Ladies against HIV/AIDS (OAFLA)

20th Ordinary General Assembly

29 January, 2018

COMMUNIQUÉ

We, the African First Ladies, members of the Organisation of African First Ladies against HIV/AIDS (OAFLA) meeting at the 20th Ordinary General Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on January 29, 2018:

- **Concerned** that children are at greater risk of the potentially fatal consequences of HIV than any other age group and that 50% of untreated HIV-infected children die before they are two years old.
- **Concerned** that new HIV infections are still being recorded among children and adolescents, especially adolescent girls and that the numbers are not declining as quickly as among other age groups, particularly in Africa;
- **Concerned** that most new cases of HIV in children under 15-years-old are caused by mother-to-child transmission
- **Concerned** that a quarter of all adults newly infected with HIV are young women of reproductive age, placing their future offspring at risk, with unintended pregnancy being on the rise
- **Recognising** that inhibition of HIV among women of childbearing age and providing services for prevention, diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases is the gateway to end AIDS
- **Cognizant** that we must not lose the momentum and the hard-fought gains of the global HIV movement and that eliminating mother-to-child transmission of HIV is critical to achieving the ambitious goals set out in the Agenda 2063, the Maputo Protocol and the revised 2016-2030 Maputo Plan of Action;

- **Agree** to champion *Free To Shine*, a continental campaign spearheaded by the Organization of African First Ladies Against HIV/AIDS (OAFLA) and the African Union (AU) to end childhood AIDS in Africa by 2030 and keep mothers healthy
- **Commit** to advocate for resources and prioritization of the delivery of effective and sustainable HIV and AIDS health services that are accessible to all who need them.
- **Recommit** to increase understanding of how to prevent HIV and AIDS in childhood by keeping mothers healthy, preventing mother to child transmission and ensuring fast and effective identification and treatment of HIV infected children.
- **Pledge** to advocate for the removal of barriers that prevent children, women and mothers affected by HIV and AIDS from accessing health services.
- **Call** upon all Member States of the African Union, the Heads of State, the Ministers of Health, Finance, Social Affairs and Local Government Leaders, Community Leaders, Traditional and Religious Leaders, the Media, and Civil Society Organisations to unite and support personal and collective understanding of the actions we can take to end childhood HIV and AIDS
- **Reaffirm** our commitment to leverage our unique position to support the implementation of Start Free, Stay Free, AIDS Free; the Maputo Protocol and Maputo Plan of Action and the ‘State of the African Woman Campaign,’ aimed at securing, realizing and extending the rights of young women and adolescents in African Union policies.