

The launch of 2006 as the year of accelerated HIV/AIDS prevention in Uganda: Kabira Country Club, 3 August, 2006

Welcome Remarks by

Hon. Beatrice Wabudeya,
Minister in Charge of the Presidency

Our Chief Guest, The Vice President of Uganda,

Honourable Ministers,

Chairman Uganda AIDS Commission

AIDS Development Partners,

All Stakeholders in the national response,

I wish to take this opportunity to welcome all our stakeholders in the national response to this memorable event when the country's leadership takes stock of the effectiveness of our interventions in the facing of a raging epidemic

Uganda has been at the forefront of the response against HIV/AIDS for over two decades. Indeed we have made remarkable progress and have won international acclaim for this success. This was attributed to several factors including government open policy about the epidemic that encouraged dialogues, the multi-sectoral approach that brought all sectors and actors on board and the unfailing political leadership.

Recent research into the epidemic and the response however reveals worrying trends and situations. With stabilizing prevalence and incidence rates at high levels and the observation that prevention could have taken a back stage, the epidemic can easily overwhelm us.

Your Excellency, today, we are assembled here to re-light the candle of prevention that served us so well in the past. This launch targets especially all those in leadership positions at various levels to intensify HIV/AIDS prevention efforts. The idea was conceptualized by the African Health Ministers in August 2005 with foundation in the United Nations Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS of June 2001, which was endorsed by all members.

In Uganda, it has been embraced under the multi- sectoral approach demonstrated through the development of a common Country Road Map for accelerating HIV/AIDS prevention which is the basis for this launch. The Launch is indeed a significant opportunity for renewing our commitment to intensified action targeting breaking the cycle of HIV infections. While

sustaining treatment, care and support for those already infected, our efforts has to be built on the principle of preventing further spread of the virus.

Let us accelerate prevention efforts from the social, cultural, economic and health perspectives, exploiting and strengthening existing systems and structures to ensure universal access and achieve agreed targets. Let our leadership arise to this social cause, mobilize the general public and all potential actors and required resources to mount an effective response

Your Excellency, colleagues in the national response, let us all work together as we have always done and launch a consolidated prevention campaign against the pandemic.

Together we share the challenge

(As presented by Dr Kihumuro Apuuli, Director General, Uganda AIDS Commission)