HIV rate in Uganda decreasing

Yesterday, Uganda joined the rest of the world to commemorate the World Aids Day. I wish to thank those who have done a commendable job in fighting HIV/Aids. Although it is not totally wiped out, there is a visible improvement in people living with HIV. Uganda has long basked in the praise by the international community over its swift and progressive response to its crippling HIV/Aids epidemic.

Back in the 1980s, more than 30 per cent of Ugandans contracted the HIV. Today, the national prevalence rate is about 6 per cent, according to Uganda Population-Based HIV Impact Assessment (UPHIA) report of 2016. This achievement is attributed largely to the country's rapid acknowledgment of the crisis it faced, the roll out of national prevention and treatment messages and the open discourse around causes and solutions to the scourge.

Uganda has made significant progress in the national HIV response. Among women and men, HIV prevalence declined from 8.3 per cent and 6.1 per cent in 2011 to 7.5 per cent and 6 per cent in 2016 respectively. In urban areas, the rate has also



declined from 8.7 per cent to 7.1 per cent while in rural areas, it fell from 7.0 per cent to 5.5 per cent. These declines in HIV prevalence are due to the intensified HIV prevention and treatment services in the country that lead to the decrease in the number of new infections in recent years.

All this shows that right now, people living with HIV/Aids can have a normal life span even when their immunity is not that good. However, the difference is seen from those who had HIV in the 1980s. Due to lack of medication in the '80s, patients had to be segregated from the community and they later died. It indiscriminately killed the poor and the rich, mature and young, women and men, etc. Today, even people without money can live with HIV, which shows that Uganda is on course to eliminate HIV.

Thanks to the government under the leadership of President Museveni, Kabaka of Buganda Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II, musicians, especially Philly Bongole Lutaaya, NGOs, United Nation, the media, civil society, Taso and everyone who has done a commendable job in making sure that HIV/Aids is on decrease in Uganda.

Although the HIV is on the decrease, I urge all Ugandans to be more careful and be each other's keeper. Abstain before marriage, be careful to your partner and should all this fail, use a condom.

To pregnant mothers, I appeal to you to visit a doctor so as to protect the baby from acquiring HIV.

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