

Vision Group commences fight against HIV/AIDS

By John Agaba

Starting today upto December 1 when the entire globe unites in the fight against HIV/AIDS, *New Vision* and its affiliate media outlets will dust their guns and once again head for the forefront in an attempt to incapacitate the killer disease.

In today's *Mwalimu* pullout, a bullet has been lodged deep inside one of the virus many arms that has been terrorising school children.

New Vision deputy editor

Catherine Mwesigwa said: "There was a time when fighting HIV was everybody's responsibility. We intend to rally everyone back to the forefront."

Vision Group's strategy is all-encompassing. With in-depth analyses about the long journey (of now more than 30 years) the country has walked with the virus, the current situation and where the country is heading. The plan will seek to influence behaviour change to reduce new infections.

BETWEEN THE LINES:

■ We shall use local and English language, all our talkshows, social media to spread the message, Mwesigwa said.

The analyses will delve into the gaps which have so far let the virus off the hook.

Mwesigwa said: "This fight has to be fought collectively if we are to stand a chance and that is why we want

to mobilise everyone — the young, adolescents, the elderly, church leaders, everyone.

"There was a time when the fight was everybody's concern. There were few resources, little information. But that was when the country was able to fight the enemy and bring down prevalence from over 18% to below 6%. The secret weapon? But after the ARVs came, many abandoned the fight to the health sector and to people living with HIV," she added.

"Everybody fighting is

what will get us to zero new infections, zero AIDS-related deaths, zero stigma," Mwesigwa explained.

"We shall use all our platforms, local language and English language, all our talkshows, social media, sections in newspapers, every stage to spread the message," Mwesigwa added.

"We still have a lot of cross-generational sex. And chances are the young women who engage in relations with older men also have sweethearts who are agemates," she added.

Mwesigwa said: "We have pregnant women who delay or do not seek antenatal care and can transmit the virus to their unborn babies if infected. We also have men who are scared of taking HIV tests.

"We want the messages to encourage everyone to recommit that they will not contract the virus if they are negative or spread it if they are positive," Mwesigwa said.

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