

Uganda on course in HIV fight

EDITOR: Yesterday, Uganda joined the rest of the world to commemorate World AIDS Day. I wish to thank those who have done a commendable job. It is not over, but there is an improvement. Uganda has long basked in the praise of the international community over its swift and progressive response to HIV/AIDS.

In the 1980s, more than 30% of Ugandans had contracted HIV. Now the national prevalence rate is around 7%, according to the Uganda Population-Based HIV Impact Assessment (UPHIA) report of 2016, an achievement attributed largely to the country's acknowledgment of the crisis, roll out of prevention and treatment messages and its open discourse around the scourge.

This indicates that Uganda has made significant progress in the national HIV response. Among women and men, HIV prevalence declined from 8.3% and 6.1% in 2011, to 7.5% and 6% in 2016 respectively.

All this has proved that people living

with HIV/AIDS can have a normal lifespan, which cannot exactly be said of the people who had the virus in the 1980s. Due to lack of medication in the 1980s, patients had to be segregated and stigmatisation was at an all-time high. HIV/AIDS did not segregate between the rich and poor, young or old and women or men. Today even those without money can live a long and productive life.

Although the virus is in decline, recent advancements in its care and management have led some to live reckless and complacent lives, which is threatening to reverse the achievements that were gained in the 1980s and 1990s. HIV/AIDS is still real and still kills, it is wise to abstain from sex, be faithful to your partner and use condoms. To the expectant women, please take antenatal visits seriously and enroll for care so as to protect your unborn babies.

**David Serumaga,
Kampala**