



**Official Statement by  
The Minister in the  
The Prime Minister's Office**

**at The Ministerial Virtual Meeting  
of  
Global HIV Prevention Coalition (GPC),  
HIV Prevention 2021-2025 taking stock, planning  
the future.**

**18<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

## **Program Director,**

Allow me to thank the Global HIV Prevention Coalition (GPC) for organising this August meeting of taking stock and planning the future for HIV Prevention. I would like to pay my respect to;

- The Executive Director UNAIDS - Winnie Byanyima,
- Executive Director The Global Fund- Peter Sands,
- UNFPA Executive Director – Natalia Kanem
- Honourable Ministers of Health & those responsible for HIV and AIDS

## **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The 2020 Road Map that was endorsed in October 2017 as a strategy to achieve the 2016 Political Declaration on HIV Prevention targets laid a foundation for GPC member states to domesticate their road maps aligned to the 10 action points.

## **Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Guests,**

Lesotho has made significant strides in the implementation of its Road Map. To date, the two major achievements are; Combination Prevention for Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) and their male partners and Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis roll-out. The Adolescent Girls and Young Women and their male partners programs have been rolled- out in the 10 districts of the country. The core packages of services were developed and implemented nationwide. These are differentiated by age and in-or-out of school status. The core packages include:

- HIV testing and counselling
- Education subsidies
- Post-violence care for survivors of gender-based violence
- School-based HIV and violence prevention programs
- Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)
- Condom promotion and provision for AGYW and their partners
- Improved access to youth friendly sexual and reproductive health care and a full range of contraceptive methods
- Parenting/caregiver programs
- Community mobilization and norms change programs

## **Program Director,**

The second achievement in the area of HIV Prevention is **Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis roll-out (PrEP)**. The Kingdom of Lesotho has seen notable increase in the number of people receiving PrEP, for example; In 2019 seven thousand three hundred (7300) people received PrEP, while in the 3rd quarter of 2020 a total of 35 478 people received PrEP, thus a 386% increase.

## **Honorable Ministers, Distinguished Guests,**

This was not an easy road map to navigate through. Lesotho experienced a number of obstacles mainly;

- Multi-Sectoral collaboration and coordination of efforts by several stakeholders remain a challenge particularly at district and community levels. For example, referral pathways for AGYW to HIV, Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) and Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) services are informal and poorly coordinated which negatively affects access to these services.
- The other challenge is that The HIV prevention funding has not increased in line with the country's epidemic scenario. This is due to; firstly, declining international funding for HIV Prevention responses, secondly, inability to increase domestic funding for HIV prevention due to competing priorities. The emergence of COVID 19 in 2020 further compromised budgetary allocation to HIV prevention.

## **Distinguished Guests,**

Lesotho has prioritized the following actions for HIV Prevention programming; first, to strengthen the Coordinating Authority, it has begun the process of addressing legal and governance issues. Recently, the new Board of Commissioners was gazetted in line with the National AIDS Commission (NAC) Act. The plan is also to build NAC's capacity at district level with Human and Financial Resources to enhance capacity to coordinate.

Secondly, The Kingdom of Lesotho plans to scale-up and strengthen HIV, SRH, SGBV services and social accountability involving client monitoring of AGYW and key populations friendly services.

Finally, the Kingdom of Lesotho is exploring the avenue for online counselling for all populations and to institutionalize alternative access routes to PrEP and other HIV Prevention services.

**I THANK YOU.**

