



MINISTRY OF SPORT, YOUTH AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER, HONOURABLE GEORGE CHULUMANDA AT THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE HIV/AIDS CARTOON BOOKLET “ STAND UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS” ON STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION IN ZAMBIA AT IMBOELA STADIUM, SUNDAY 6Th NOVEMBER 2005.

THE WHO REPRESENTATIVE DR. STELLA ANYANGWE
REPRESENTATIVES FROM UN AGENCIES IN ZAMBIA
REPRESENTATIVES FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
THE PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF HEALTH
THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, CENTRAL BOARD OF HEALTH
THE FAZ PRESIDENT
THE PROVINCIAL HEALTH DIRECTOR, LUSAKA
THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF HEALTH, LUSAKA
DISTINGUISHED INVITED GUESTS
MEMBERS OF THE PRESS
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I AM PLEASED AND FEEL GREATLY HONOURED TO BE PART OF THIS IMPORTANT EVENT WHICH MARKS THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE CARTOON ON HIV/AIDS-RELATED STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION UNDER THE TITLE "HIV/AIDS STAND UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS" IN ZAMBIA, .

I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT ZAMBIA IS THE SECOND COUNTRY (AFTER UGANDA) TO ORGANIZE THE LAUNCH AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE CARTOON "HIV/AIDS STAND UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS". ALLOW ME TO PAY SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION COUNTRY OFFICE AND THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF ZAMBIA FOR GOING INTO PARTNERSHIP TO ORGANISE THIS IMPORTANT EVENT AND FOR CHOOSING FOOTBALL AS A MEANS TO DISSEMINATE HIV/AIDS INFORMATION. IT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT FOOTBALL IS A VERY POPULAR SPORT IN ZAMBIA AMONG THE YOUTH AND ADULTS.

FOOTBALL CAN BE USED AS A MEDIUM TO DISSEMINATE IMPORTANT HUMAN RIGHTS AND PUBLIC HEALTH MESSAGES. THIS PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN WHO AND THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF ZAMBIA SETS AN EXAMPLE OF THE TYPES OF NECESSARY INITIATIVES TO COMBAT THE EPIDEMIC.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO EXTEND SPECIAL THANKS TO THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR FOOTBALL ASSOCIATIONS, (FIFA) FOR TAKING THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF SPONSORING THE LAUNCH OF THE CARTOON. IT IS MY HOPE THAT THE LAUNCH OF THIS CARTOON WILL STIMULATE FURTHER UTILISATION OF FOOTBALL AND INDEED OTHER SPORTS TO DELIVER KEY HEALTH MESSAGES TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, ZAMBIA IS A COUNTRY SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY HIV/AIDS. HIV AFFECTS ALL PARTS OF ZAMBIA BOTH URBAN AND RURAL. THE ZAMBIA HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY FOR 2001-2002 REPORTS THAT 16% OF

ADULT ZAMBIANS ARE HIV POSITIVE. AT THE CRUX OF THE EPIDEMIC ARE YOUNG PEOPLE. IT IS A COMMON FACT THAT ZAMBIA'S POPULATION IS RELATIVELY YOUNG, AS 68% IS THAT OF PERSONS BETWEEN 0 AND 24 YEARS. THIS IS WHY YOUNG PEOPLE ARE, AND MUST BE, AT THE CENTRE OF ACTION ON HIV/AIDS. SPORT IS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE IN HIV/AIDS PREVENTION.

THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE EPIDEMIC IS MULTISECTORAL, WITH A FOCUS ON REDUCTION OF HIV TRANSMISSION THROUGH INFORMATION AND EDUCATION, CONDOM PROMOTION AND DISTRIBUTION, ENHANCEMENT OF LIFE SKILLS AND WORKPLACE PREVENTION AND CONTROL PROGRAMMES, STI TREATMENT, BLOOD SCREENING AND STRENGTHENING OF HEALTH SERVICES, VOLUNTARY COUNSELLING AND TESTING OF INDIVIDUALS AND PROVISION OF ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY.

STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION VIOLATE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS AND THUS SHOULD BE PREVENTED, ELIMINATED OR REDUCED WHEREVER THEY EXIST IN WHATEVER FORM. LET US BE REMINDED THAT STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION ALSO REINFORCE THE SILENCE AND DENIAL ABOUT THE HIV/AIDS EPIDEMIC WITHIN SOCIETY. THE MOST SERIOUS EFFECT IS THAT IT CAN FURTHER ISOLATE AND PREVENT THOSE AFFECTED FROM SEEKING AND ACCESSING INFORMATION AND HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND ALSO PARTICIPATION IN PREVENTION AND CARE INITIATIVES. INVOLVEMENT OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS IS CENTRAL TO REDUCING THE IMPACT OF THE EPIDEMIC.

FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION IS A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE IN INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW AND IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV/AIDS. ZAMBIA IS PARTY TO HUMAN RIGHTS CONVENTIONS THAT RECOGNIZE HEALTH AS A HUMAN RIGHT AND/OR OTHER HEALTH-RELATED RIGHTS. THEREFORE, THE GOVERNMENT'S PUBLIC GUIDANCE NEEDS TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THESE HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS. PROMOTING AND PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV/AIDS IS ESSENTIAL TO ENSURE AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO THE EPIDEMIC. THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE "3 X 5" INITIATIVE WHICH AS INTRODUCED BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION IN 2003 WITH THE AIM OF PUTTING 3 MILLION PEOPLE ON ANTI-RETROVIRAL TREATMENT BY THE END OF 2005.

STIGMA BASED ON MISINFORMATION SHOULD BE REDUCED FROM OUR SOCIETY. IGNORANCE OR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF HIV OR INACCURATE MESSAGES CAN BREED STIGMA. THE LAUNCH OF THIS CARTOON IS THEREFORE TIMELY. IT WILL HELP TO RAISE AWARENESS AMONG YOUTH (AS WELL AS ADULTS). ITS AIMS ARE :

- TO INFORM ABOUT HOW HIV/AIDS CAN AND CANNOT BE TRANSMITTED, AND HOW ONE CAN PROTECT ONESELF.
- TO BREAK EXISTING TABOOS, REDUCE STIGMA AND COMBAT HIV/AIDS DISCRIMINATION BY CLEARLY ILLUSTRATING THE POSITIVE IMPACT IN RESPONDING EFFECTIVELY TO THE EPIDEMIC.
- TO EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS IN RELATION TO HIV/AIDS.

- TO ENCOURAGE TOLERANCE AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV/AIDS PANDEMIC

THE CARTOON IS WRITTEN IN A LANGUAGE ACCESSIBLE TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD. THE CARTOON SHOWS HOW WE SHOULD BEHAVE TOWARDS EACH OTHER WHEN FACED WITH SUCH A BIG CHALLENGE AS THE HIV/AIDS PANDEMIC. IT SHOWS THAT PEOPLE COME FROM VARIOUS BACKGROUNDS AND COMMUNITIES AND ENCOURAGES THEM TO BEHAVE LIKE ALL FOOTBALLERS - TO PLAY IN UNITY.

COMMUNITY MOBILISATION IS AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF THE "3 X 5" INITIATIVE. SPORT IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF MOBILISING COMMUNITIES FOR ACTION AGAINST HIV/AIDS AND IT SHOULD BE INTEGRATED IN SOCIETY AT ALL LEVELS. THEREFORE I WOULD LIKE TO CALL UPON SCHOOLS, GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES, PRIVATE SECTOR, NGOS, COMMUNITY BASED ORGANISATIONS TO USE SPORT AS A MEANS FOR DISSEMINATION OF HIV/AIDS INFORMATION.

LET US BE REMINDED THAT SPORT UNITES US ALL AND STIGMA DIVIDES US.

I THANK YOU ALL.

