

# ARV TREATMENT IN ZAMBIA: CURRENT ISSUES

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## Introduction

- “ARV provision is a must, coupled with basic balanced diet, and we must not forget Malaria and TB. We can’t deal with one if we can’t deal with the others...It is time to be innovative and creative. This is either about the extinction of humankind or the rebirth of our people.” (Syamalevwe, 2002, p.2)

## Why Current Issues in ARV Treatment?

- HIV/AIDS is a Health, Development and Human Rights Issue with Emergency and Long Term Development Goals

## Goals of ART Treatment

- The Main Goal of ART Treatment Ought to be Universal Coverage, because it is a human rights issue.
- Effective ART Treatment not a stand alone response, but just one of three inter-related responses.
- Others being VCT, Prevention and Care

## Early Response ART

- Too Expensive to Provide by A Highly Indebted Poor Country Preoccupied with Economic Reform and Recovery.
- Access to ART Left to Individuals and Families, Public Efforts confined to Prevention and Fighting Stigma attached to HIV/AIDS
- Increased Availability of ART in Developed Countries Raised Moral Questions about Its non-availability to people in Developing Countries

## Road to Universal Coverage

- 2004 Zambia Declared HIV/AIDS a National Disaster and offered Subsidized ART to those who could afford the Subsidized Treatment
- February 2005 In recognition of HIV/AIDS as a human rights and moral issue and thanks to change of attitudes at the global level, Zambia committed its self to provision of ART to all persons living in the country and in need of the treatment

## Challenges to Universal Access To ART in Zambia

- Hidden Costs of Access to ART
  - Long Distances to ART Centres;
  - Transport Costs; and
  - Time Taken to Get To Treatment Centresconspire to Keep ART out of Reach of Poor people in Rural and Urban Areas

## Issues in ART Treatment Cont..

- Shortages of Health Workers Confine ART Treatment to a Few Centres
- Undermine the Quality of Services, especially Provision of Information about ART and Counselling

## Issues in ART Treatment Cont..

- Gender Inequality:
- More women than men live with HIV/AIDS, but more men than women are on ART;
- Inequalities in access to information and other resources;
- Gender roles make it more difficult for women to access treatment for themselves

## Issues in ART Treatment Cont.

- Role of Nutrition in Successful ART though better understood than before, provision of ART goes without Nutrition Support
- Lack of Nutrition Support Adversely Affect Adherence To Treatment and Quality of life on treatment

## Issues in ART Treatment Cont..

- Poor provision of information about ART Treatment keeps some patients away from treatment;
- Poor linkages between the Traditional Health Providers and the Public Health Institutions makes It harder to Dispel myths about HIV and ART treatment;
- Inadequate social support to people on treatment

## Conclusions

- Some Progress made on emergency responses, but still a long way to go to universal access and upholding human dignity
- Stigma and Discrimination still abound and adversely affects ART Adherence and Treatment
- Need to Redouble Effort in Provision of Information and Improvement of Quality of in Public Health Services
- Political will on the part of all political players seems inadequate. A lot more remains to be done

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