

Daily Nation

Tuesday December 2, 2008

# Editor. . .

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## TALKING POINT

# Unless we wage a full-scale war against Aids, forget Vision 2030

**A**s we celebrated the World Aids Day yesterday, there were various activities to show our attempt at mitigating the epidemic.

Aids is viewed as a social, gender and educational issue. We have programmes scattered in the ministries of Health, Public Health and Special Programmes.

Already, there is a debate about where the National Aids Control Council falls.

The HIV Control Act has for two years been waiting for parliamentarians to pass operational legislation to make it work.

When it comes to the fight against HIV, officers are often busy chasing local purchase orders in order to get kick-backs. As such, they have no time to concentrate on the noble work of writing credible proposals acceptable to the Global Fund.

In the financial year 2007/08, it was claimed that Sh13 billion given by the fund could not be accounted for. Surprisingly, the House has not demanded the sacking, interdiction or resignation of the concerned individuals. We can imagine the magnitude of this figure if we consider that the Ministry of Health is allocated Sh12 billion in a year.



Mothers queue for health services at a Rift Valley hospital.

The result is a blame game mostly by government officials and NGOs.

My question to the dreamers of Vision 2030 is, where do you place HIV and Aids in the vision plan? Our life expectancy has gone down to 47 years and Kenyans cannot afford our staple food, ugali. Carbohydrates replenish lost energy and heat in the body, but lack of purchasing power by the populace makes them more vulnerable.

Our greed makes us grab that which the well-wishers are providing and in the process, we waste time and money, and stall any progress in the fight against HIV and Aids. We have become like the

proverbial hyena, which when pierced by a hunters spear and the intestines come out, starts eating them not knowing they belong to it.

Where are the people living with Aids kept when it comes to allocating the money from the fund? These are the people who are needy and have their pictures put on the proposals and appeals for funds as bait to the donors. Let me remind our leaders that in the Millennium Development Goals, HIV and Aids is Number One, but in Kenya, very little has happened.

The theme of this years World Aids Day is "Leadership", and we hope that the leaders will show personal ex-

ample in promoting accountability in the administration of funds allocated for the fight against HIV and Aids. Let us not forget that so far, HIV has no cure. We need to be responsible in word and deed in all spheres of our lives.

KAMICHORE MUTINDIRA,  
Nairobi

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Kenya joined the world in marking the World Aids Day yesterday.

Fighting HIV and Aids calls for the collective involvement of the infected and affected.

Expectant mothers should be encouraged to attend ante natal clinics where their HIV status is established to ensure children are born free of the virus.

Traditional birth attendants should be aware of their patients' HIV status.

Efforts by herbalists keen on helping those living with Aids should not be trivialised, but encouraged.

The life-saving ARVs and food should be supplied to the affected.

Circumcision should not be seen as cure. Call for people to know their HIV status is fine, but behaviour change will be key in reducing prevalence.

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