

Kenyans join the world to mark day

Plea to end discrimination against the people infected with virus dominate messages

By NATION Team

Kenyans marked the World Aids Day with speeches, songs, processions and calls for an end to stigmatisation of people infected with HIV/Aids.

In **Bungoma**, people with disabilities marked the day by leading a procession through the town streets.

The procession was flagged off by ACK Bishop Eliud Wabukala, at St Christine's Church.

Bishop Wabukala said people with special needs were stigmatised more when infected with the virus.

In **Kericho**, local medical officer of health Christopher Kemboi said the district had between 9-13 per cent HIV/Aids prevalence.

Dr Kemboi said 12 per cent of pregnant mothers were also infected.

Status

The officer who spoke at Kericho Uhuru Gardens, appealed to the public to visit Voluntary Counselling and Testing Centres to know their status.

In **Nyamira**, district commissioner Jamlek Baruga warned that parents who circumcised girls would be arrested and prosecuted.

Mr Baruga, who spoke at Ikonge Secondary School, told those infected to beware of quacks who claimed to have the cure for the disease.

The district HIV/Aids counsellor, Mr John Oyuka, said 13 per cent of the district population had been infected.

Visiting families

Youths also marked the day by visiting families affected by the disease.

In **Kisumu**, a woman living with the virus moved a crowd to tears as she narrated how an NGO used her signature and that of her colleagues to obtain funds, only to abandon them later.

Ms Eunice Atogo told the crowd at Jomo Kenyatta grounds how the Kisumu-based NGO later sacked her when she went public with the scandal in which funds meant for a conference in Uganda were pocketed by its sponsor.

Nyanza provincial commissioner Aggrey Mudinyu, Kisumu DC Wilfred ole Legei and other guests, fought back

tears as Ms Atogo narrated how a senior pastor and her church refused to pray for her when she went public about her status.

Mr Legei said the government would close down clubs showing obscene dances.

He said Kisumu's entertainment industry had contributed to the spread of the virus.

Mr Mudinyu said that although the province still had a high Aids prevalence rate, the infection rate was slowing down in Kisumu Town.

Coast residents celebrated the day by visiting homes for destitutes.

Casual sex

In **Kiambu**, residents gathered at Kamirithu market where dances, songs and skits with messages on Aids were presented at the celebrations attended by MPs.

The Kanu MPs who included Njenga Karume (Kiambaa), Kuria Kanyingi (Limuru), Arthur Magugu (Githunguri) and Viscount Kimathi (Lari) and DC James Waweru, gave speeches in which they asked the people to avoid casual sex.

At the **Department of Defence**, all the barracks held separate activities.

At **Kabete** barracks, the soldiers marched in a procession for 8km from the barracks to Kangemi.

In **Makueni**, DC Paul Olando advised the youth to desist from illicit sex and told the married people to stick to their partners.

Mr Olando told wananchi at Tawa market in Mbooni that the disease was claiming lives of more than 700 people daily.

The DC said that in Makueni, three-quarters of the admitted patients in Makueni hospital were Aids sufferers and advised those with such patients not to neglect them.

Mr Olando revealed that the district had received more than 4,600 bags of white maize to be distributed to the hunger stricken families.

Reported by Luke Kapchanga, Sollo Kiragu, Henry Nyarora, John Kisu, John Oywa, Angwenyi Gichana, Beautah Omanga, Ngumbao Kithi and Muniu Riunge



Photos/Joseph mathenge

1. Children from KECOFATUMA demonstrate against Aids during the World Aids Day celebrations held at the KICC in Nairobi yesterday.

2. Senior Superintendent Agnes Mwanyigah communicates on her radio set with the Aids sticker.

3. A young man follows the proceedings.

4. For this woman, the message was clearly displayed on her miniature flags.



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Photo/Gideon Maundu

Aids educators march through Nduruma Road in Mombasa to mark the World Aids Day, which was celebrated throughout the world yesterday.

Tears flow freely as man narrates how he quit his job

By NATION Correspondent

A Kenya Power and Lighting Company employee yesterday moved scores of people to tears when he narrated how he resigned because he was HIV-positive.

Mr John Aremo, who has lived with the virus for 17 years,

said he quit his job in 1995 because of fear of stigmatisation and discrimination at the work place.

He cited instances when his female colleague who had developed full-blown Aids, was sidelined when other workers realised she was infected.

Narrating his ordeal at the

Afraha stadium, Nakuru, Mr Aremo said that when he went to his rural home in Siaya district, his relatives abandoned him due to traditional beliefs that he had been bewitched.

"One morning as I lay in bed I prayed to God to forgive me and pleaded with him that should he heal me, I would preach the

gospel to create awareness about the scourge," he said.

Miraculously, the man with two wives said, he regained energy and woke up from his mattress and preached to his mother about God's healing power.

Mr Aremo said he said he lost one wife in 1999.