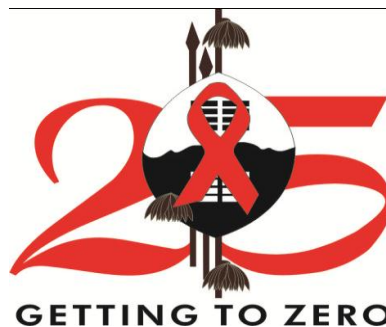


25 YEARS OF HIV AND AIDS IN SWAZILAND



ZERO NEW INFECTIONS ZERO STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION ZERO AIDS RELATED DEATHS

“BUILDING ON ACHIEVEMENTS TO GET TO ZERO”

CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE 25 YEARS OF HIV AND AIDS IN SWAZILAND

1. INTRODUCTION

It has been thirty years (1981) since Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported the first case of HIV and over twenty five years since the first case (1986) was reported in Swaziland. Although it is reasonable to believe that it was not the first case of HIV, the year is regarded as significant in the recognition of the pandemic in the country. Over the subsequent decades the country went through typical stages of growth in the response, and the earlier stages, first being denial and shock.

However, since then, the country has recognized the pandemic as a threat to livelihood and embraced the responsibility that comes with it. Faced with the burden of hosting the highest prevalence rate in the world, the country gradually came to terms with the task at hand and began to roll out much needed assistance to people who were infected and affected.

Led by His Majesty's declaration of the pandemic as a national disaster in the year 1999, and supported by the political and government's commitment as well as the donor community, the country undertook aggressive advocacy coupled with clinical and non clinical interventions to address the pandemic.

Advocacy activities have often focused on what needs to be done to turn around the epidemic tide around. Inadvertently, this has focused on the negative aspects of the epidemic. Minimal effort has been made to highlight or recognize achievements that have been realized over the years.

After twenty five years, the country takes pride in the accomplishments it has made in the response to HIV and AIDS and stands as one of the best achievers in some of the interventions. This signifies the maturing of the response in the country and is viewed as the beginning of the turning around of the HIV tide.

To acknowledge this milestone and encourage the nation to continue in the war against HIV and AIDS, NERCHA is proposing to host an event to recognize the achievements it has recognized in the response in the past twenty five years. This commemoration will both seek to encourage continued participation in and ownership of the response by the entire population as well as recognize the efforts of individuals and organizations that have stood above the rest in the response.

2. ORINATION

This event is meant to be all inclusive, in recognition of the national ownership. In an effort to minimize duplication of national events, the commemoration will coincide with the World AIDS Day.

It has also been observed that the World AIDS Day commemoration has become monotonous and is quickly losing impact. It is believed that the introduction of this form of the commemoration will help to refocus attention to the pandemic and its effects in the country.

The focus of the day's commemoration will be success stories that can be shared by individuals and organizations. These will be across all four thematic areas and from all the corners of the country. The celebration will

assume the format of a World AIDS Day Commemoration with a focus on success stories.