

GLOBAL AIDS POLICY PARTNERSHIP STATEMENT ON WORLD AIDS DAY 2021

December 1, 2021, Washington, D.C. – As we commemorate World AIDS Day this year, the [Global AIDS Policy Partnership](#) (GAPP), a coalition of over 70 advocacy and implementing organizations committed to expanding and improving global HIV and AIDS programming, urges policymakers to draw their attention to the compounding inequalities facing people living with and most vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. As multiple pandemics, including COVID-19, threaten to reverse hard-won gains in this fight, strong leadership that champions health equity is critical to our collective success on the road to ending HIV and AIDS by 2030.

We have made great strides in developing innovative technologies that make living full lives with HIV and AIDS possible. We know how to treat the disease and how to prevent it. However, social and economic inequities continue to bar access to testing and treatment services for particular groups, and social pressures contribute to a rise in new cases.

Young women and girls aged 15-19 account for five out of six new infections in sub-Saharan Africa and AIDS is the leading cause of death for women 15-49 years old. All national governments, multilateral institutions, and foreign aid organizations must commit to preserving and strengthening programming and policies aimed at preventing new infections among young women and girls, including free quality secondary schooling, economic empowerment, sexual and reproductive health services, and age-appropriate sex education. We must also commit to ushering in a cultural shift, permitting women to seek out their own health care to receive HIV treatment services without fear of retribution or stigmatization in clinics or their communities.

Key populations and their partners now account for 60% of all new adult HIV transmissions, yet these communities are often denied rights, equity, and justice. At the same time, services geared specifically toward these communities are often under-resourced. We urge policymakers at global fora to highlight the harm of criminalization of key populations and criminalizing HIV non-disclosure, exposure, and transmission. We call on governments to remove all egregious legislation that impacts the HIV response. National governments must also commit to extending services to key populations free of discrimination and stigma, particularly when it comes from their health providers. The HIV pandemic will never end if key populations are not provided with quality, equitable services and support.

We can and should end HIV as a public health threat by 2030, but this can only happen if we eliminate the barriers that prevent us from reaching all those in need. This World AIDS Day, we encourage decision-makers to reflect on the inequities that keep us from reaching our goals and commit to truly ending them, thereby ending HIV/AIDS.