



MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SMALL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

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PRESS RELEASE

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MINISTER OF LABOUR AND SMALL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

OBSERVING WORLD AIDS DAY

Today, I join with you my fellow citizens and the international community as we commemorate the observance of World AIDS Day 2017 under this year's UNAIDS theme: "**My Health, My Right**". The aim is to focus on the right to health and explores the challenges people around the world face in exercising their rights.

Managing HIV and AIDS in and through the workplace not only protect the rights of workers to manage their health and their livelihoods but can improve productivity at both the enterprise and national levels. In fact, the ILO's Recommendation concerning HIV and AIDS and the World of Work, adopted in 2010, states that HIV and AIDS can have a serious impact on economies, enterprises and can ultimately undermine sustainable development.

There is the popular saying that, "No man is an island", as such I must acknowledge the work of all our Partners and Stakeholders, without whose tireless efforts and contribution the Ministry's objectives would not be realized. It is therefore clear that all Stakeholders can benefit from a strong collaborative response to HIV and AIDS.

As a progressive society, I urge each Stakeholder to take up the mantle and be the force of change that our society requires. Through civil society activism and social mobilization together we can transform a potentially frightening reality into an opportunity for hope. Each act of commitment and social responsibility with regards to HIV and AIDS demonstrated by both employer and employee can save lives.

As with other chronic illnesses, persons infected and affected by HIV can continue to lead healthy, productive lives and contribute meaningfully to their work and by extension society. HIV awareness, workplace interventions can decrease stigmatization and discrimination of workers living with and affected by HIV.

The Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development is doing its best to contribute to several important international targets including UNAIDS' new 90-90-90 targets which are that by the year 2020:

- 90% of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status.
- 90% of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy.
- 90% of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have viral suppression.

The Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development is committed to doing its part and is putting workers, employers and national productivity on the forefront of its agenda for the realization of Decent Work for all. Through collaboration and dedicated effort it will be possible to mitigate the impact of HIV on our workforce.

The Ministry joins in global solidarity as we take this time to remember the ones we have lost to the disease and equally focus our attention to the plights of those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. We reflect on the significant strides that have been made and look forward with a renewed level of vigor towards a heightened national response to HIV and AIDS.

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