

## Was 2010 the Year of Universal Access in Kenya and the World?

The year 2010 was expected to be a unique year in the response to HIV and TB. This is particularly so since 2010 was the year of Universal Access. Yes, Universal Access targets were set and should have been met by the end of 2010.

In this first edition of 2011 NEPHAK Weekly Bulletin, we sample some of the milestones noted in Kenya and elsewhere which pushed the world towards Universal Access. The selection is based on NEPHAK clarion call for Universal Access and Human Rights for people living with HIV and those infected with TB.

**January 2010:** The year opens with the launch of a new strategic plan geared towards the delivery of Universal Access to services. During the launch of KNASP 111, NEPHAK leadership calls for domestic funding for HIV treatment

**March 2010:** NEPHAK leadership joins other stakeholders to mark World TB Day 2010. Here, NEPHAK leadership highlights the potential threat of TB among PLHIV and calls for the adoption of strategies aimed at reducing the burden of TB among PLHIV

**April 2010:** NEPHAK leadership on the invitation of the UK All Party Parliamentary Group on AIDS joins politicians, activities and scientists during a High Level meeting on Universal Access in UK. During this meeting, a call is made on world leaders and countries to honour their commitment to fund health and HIV/AIDS

**May/June 2010:** NEPHAK completes the mapping phase of HIV leadership through Accountability Programme thereby building a solid evidence base about *why* it is important to achieve Universal Access and *how* this can happen in practice through the *meaningful* participation of PLHIV. The information gathered will inform national-level priorities and the delivery of HIV programmes with

a focus on key issues. More importantly, results highlight the unique role of civil society, including people living with HIV networks, in working with governments to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate programmes that contribute to realizing targets for expanding access to HIV care, treatment and prevention.

**July 2010:** The National AIDS and STIs Control Programme (NAS COP) release guidelines for the adoption of new HIV treatment guidelines for adolescents and adults following a recommendation by the World Health Organization. In the new HIV Treatment Guidelines, PLHIV will be initiated on treatment with a CD4 of 350 and *stavudine*-based regimens be phased out gradually. In the same month, **July 2010**, NEPHAK receives support under the Health Policy Advocacy Fund (HPAF) to monitor and advocate for the implementation of the Kenya-PEPFAR Partnership Framework. The monitoring is being done in Nairobi, Nyanza and Rift Valley provinces because of the high TB/HIV burden in the regions.....

### Did you expect the Pope softened Condom Stance?

PLHIV in Kenya welcomed remarks by Pope Benedict XVI that the use of condoms might not always be wrong. The Pontiff said the use of condoms might be justified on a case to case basis to prevent the spread of HIV.

**August 2010:** "Kapsabet Trio" of Daniel Ng'etich, his brother Henry Ng'etich and Patrick Kipng'etich, all TB patients are arrested for defaulting treatment contrary to Public Health Act Chapter 242 (*Laws of Kenya*). The 2 who were initially imprisoned for 8 months are released from Kapsabet Prison after petition by NEPHAK leadership and other actors including KELIN and AIDS Law. The 2 were in prison for 3 months and had to be monitored as they start their retreatment

**September 2010:** NEPHAK members in Nairobi join other civil society leaders in a Fund the Fund March in Nairobi planned to coincide with the Global Fund Replenishment meeting. During the March,

## FACTBOX

**Who We Are:** NEPHAK is a national network that unites people living with HIV (PLHIV) and those co-infected by TB through community based organizations (CBOs), support groups, post-test clubs, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and networks in Kenya.

NEPHAK leaders renew their call for domestic funding to HIV treatment. This call is based on the fact that the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria reported a US\$1 billion funding shortfall over the next three years upsetting plans to dramatically increase HIV treatment numbers and putting people already on treatment at risk of drug resistance should funding affect the supply of their medicines.

to join the pool. UNITAID, the international health financing agency that established the pool, is optimistic many of the large pharmaceutical companies will soon follow the NIH by licensing their own patented ARVs. Alongside the initiative in the Medicines Patent Pool, UNITAID works to increase access to paediatric TB and HIV drugs and second line adult ARV regimens even in Kenya.

### **In the same 2010, the Global Scene offers hope for Universal Access with Microbicide breakthrough!**

After years of disappointing results, 2010 saw the first clinical evidence that a vaginal gel - known as a microbicide-could help to prevent sexual transmission of HIV. According to analysts, such a preventative tool in the hands of women would radically reduce the level of new infections.....

### **And then, ARVs for prevention**

A new study found that daily oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) - the use of ARVs to prevent HIV in high-risk groups-reduced HIV infection risk among participants who took the ARV *Truvada* by an average 43.8 percent.....

### **GeneXpert promises to provide two-hour TB test**

In December, the UN World Health Organization endorsed a new rapid test for TB that could potentially save millions of lives through earlier diagnosis. NEPHAK, which hosts the community representative to the Working Group on Global Laboratories Initiative welcomes this technology and immediately asks the government to explore ways on acquiring this diagnostic tool which will resolve the challenge of HIV-associated TB and multi-drug resistant TB.....

### **On HIV-medicines, Patent pool's first licence**

**October 2010:** US National Institutes of Health (NIH) became the first patent holder to join the recently created Medicines Patent Pool. By licensing the ARV Darunavir to the patent pool, it made the technology to produce it available for the benefit of low- and middle-income countries. NEPHAK, which hosts the community representative to UNITAID Board celebrates NIH move and calls upon other initiatives

### **But all was not smooth for Universal Access in Kenya and the World.**

In **HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Act**, PLHIV get more than they bargained for after the Minister for Special Programmes issues a commencement date for the stayed sections of the Act. Among the activated sections is that which calls for prosecution of people 'who knowingly' infect others. This is not far from HIV criminalization.....

### **And then; the United States and European Union**

fixed their eyes and hands on cheap generics from India. PLHIV and activists warned of multiple threats to the nation's generics industry, including "Special 301", an annual review process led by the Office of the US Trade Representative, which has placed India on a "priority watch list" for failure to properly enforce intellectual property rights, and a Free Trade Agreement between India and the European Union. It appears the EU is keen to circumvent India's public health protections and boost its own pharmaceutical industry, putting millions of HIV-positive people's lives at risk

### **And why introduce this new Tax on Medicines?**

We wonder what became of the Minister for Medical Services, Hon. Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o and ministry senior officials. This taxation on the sick is uncalled for.....

**And as we work to expand HIV services** to include key populations, Prime Minister Hon. Raila Odinga calls for the arrest of homosexuals thereby inadvertently assualtng national efforts geared towards Universal Access and Human Rights.....

### **Lastly and more importantly, Kenya Round 10 Application to GFATM passes Crucial Stage**