

# **STOPAIDS.** UNITING UK VOICES ON THE GLOBAL RESPONSE

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

Michael Podmore (Director)  
STOPAIDS  
Mainyard Studios  
90 Wallis Rd  
London  
E9 5LN

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Dear Prime Minister,  
CC Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP, Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, Wendy Morton MP,

Today world leaders are coming together at the start of the UN High Level Meeting on HIV and AIDS. We are writing to you as current and former cross-party parliamentarians; people living with or affected by HIV; civil society representatives; business leaders; global health experts; and medical professionals; to urge the Government to protect its position as a global leader in the fight to end AIDS.

The High Level Meeting will commit to the new Political Declaration and gives us a crucial opportunity to get the HIV response back on track. UK leadership on the global HIV response has saved millions of lives but these critical gains are in danger. Whilst other Governments are ramping up their leadership as well as financial and political commitments for the HIV response during difficult times in the COVID-19 pandemic, we fear the UK is stepping away.

It is alarming that the UK Government is implementing drastic cuts to crucial organisations in the HIV response. This includes slashing the funding to UNAIDS, Unitaid and UNFPA by over 80% respectively, and cutting global health R&D spending in half. UNAIDS is the critical agency charged to ensure an effective global HIV response, and Unitaid has directly contributed to the introduction of game-changing medicines and diagnostics - not just for HIV but also for tuberculosis, the largest killer of people living with HIV. This includes all the HIV antiretroviral drugs currently used in Africa, via the Medicines Patent Pool, and all medicines used to treat drug-resistant tuberculosis.

The Government has also decimated its funding for HIV bilateral programmes which has forced the closure of a number of vital HIV services. This has disrupted development of critical innovations to increase access to HIV and AIDS services for people living in the situations of humanitarian emergencies and other more difficult situations.

These cuts undermine the UK's priorities and leadership position held so far, having strongly endorsed UNAIDS' Global AIDS Strategy 2021-2026 only a month beforehand. Being a low-cost, high-impact agency that delivers catalytic change, UNAIDS is the exemplar for value for money. UNAIDS strategy connects closely with the focus of the UK's priorities including addressing COVID-19 and

global health security; girls' education; science, research and technology; and open societies and human rights.

These cuts couldn't have come at a worse time for the HIV pandemic. AIDS-related illnesses remain the number one killer of women of reproductive age and 1.5 million people acquired HIV in 2020. COVID-19 is now threatening to reverse years of progress. For example, across facilities surveyed by the Global Fund around the world, HIV testing fell by over 40% in 2020. Investment in the HIV response and its infrastructure in the midst of it is a core part of the UK's response to the COVID-19 crisis. HIV & AIDS community systems, including community health workers, helped to sustain and adapt services and are delivering COVID-19 responses to the most marginal populations.

These cuts also threaten to reverse decades of hard-won progress in the HIV response that UK Aid has been instrumental in delivering. It risks setting the stage for a resurgence of the pandemic which will carry a heavy human and financial toll. Moreover, these drastic cuts also risk jeopardising the UK's diplomacy and hard-won reputation as a leader for the HIV response.

We welcome how Minister Morton is leading the UK's Delegation to the High Level Meeting and how the Government has been pushing for a strong Political Declaration. But the Government's voice and impact will be jeopardised. By slashing funding for the HIV response including for UNAIDS (the agency organising the High Level Meeting), the UK is giving the dangerous impression that it no longer matches its words with action. The UK is the only G7 country to be reducing overseas aid spending. The UK is the only Government to cut UNAIDS' funding. We are concerned about these cuts in and of themselves but even more so due to the fact that the UK, as an influential donor, could set a precedent for other governments to cut funding for the HIV response as well.

As G7 President and as a historic leader for the global HIV response, the eyes of the world are on the UK. It's not too late to get the HIV response back on track and protect the UK's position as a global leader in the HIV response. During the High Level Meeting and the upcoming G7 Summit, we urge the Government to repair the impact of the HIV cuts. It can do this by announcing supplementary allocations; continuing as a leading donor to UNAIDS, UNFPA, Global Fund and Unitaids; and committing to urgently returning to the 0.7% aid spending commitment.

Yours Sincerely,

Michael Podmore, Director, STOPAIDS

Stephen Doughty MP for Cardiff South and Penarth and Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on HIV and AIDS

Dr Dan Poulter MP for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich

Chris Law MP for Dundee West and SNP Shadow International Development Secretary

Sarah Champion MP for Rotherham and Chair of the International Development Committee

Catherine West MP for Hornsey and Wood Green; and Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Shadow Minister

Alison Thewliss MP for Glasgow Central

Caroline Lucas MP for Brighton Pavilion

Clive Lewis MP for Norwich South

Rt Hon John McDonnell MP for Hayes and Harlington

Jeremy Corbyn MP for Islington North

Dr Philippa Whitford MP for Central Ayrshire

Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP for Brighton Kemptown

Claire Hanna MP for Belfast South

Ben Bradshaw MP for Exeter

Hilary Benn MP for Leeds Central

Kenny MacAskill MP for East Lothian

Dan Carden MP for Liverpool Walton

Wera Hobhouse MP for Bath

Kate Osamor MP for Edmonton

Paula Barker MP for Liverpool Wavertree

Helen Hayes MP for Dulwich and West Norwood

Neale Hanvey MP for Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath

Martyn Day MP for Linlithgow and East Falkirk

Virendra Sharma MP for Ealing Southall

Kate Osborne MP for Jarrow

Kim Johnson MP for Liverpool Riverside

Kirsten Oswald MP for East Renfrewshire

Andrew Gwynne MP for Denton and Reddish

Debbie Abrahams MP Oldham East and Saddleworth

Claudia Webbe MP for Leicester East

Patrick Grady MP Glasgow North

Wendy Chamberlain MP for North East Fife

Tommy Sheppard MP for Edinburgh East

Christine Jardine MP for Edinburgh West

Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP for Streatham

Mohammad Yasin MP for Bedford

Stewart McDonald MP for Glasgow South

Tonia Antoniazzi MP for Gower

Lord Fowler

Lord Black of Brentwood

Lord Purvis, Liberal Democrat International Development and Trade Spokesman

Rt Hon Lord Smith of Finsbury

Baroness Masham of Ilton

Lord Cashman CBE

Baroness Sheehan

Baroness Suttie

Baroness Masham of Ilton

Jeremy Lefroy

Christine Stegling, Executive Director, Frontline AIDS

Georgina Caswell, Head of Programmes Global Network of People Living with HIV

Vickie Hawkins, Executive Director, Medecins Sans Frontieres / Doctors without Borders UK

Anne Aslett, CEO, Elton John AIDS Foundation

Ian Green, Chief Executive, Terrence Higgins Trust

Deborah Gold, Chief Executive, National AIDS Trust

Naomi Burke-Shyne, Executive Director, Harm Reduction International

Alvaro Bermejo, Director-General, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)

Kevin Fisher, Director: Policy Data & Analytics, AVAC

Harriet Mason, Senior Coordinator, Youth Stop AIDS

Ruth Morgan Thomas, Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP)

Joshua Graff, Commissioner, HIV Commission

Asia Russell, Executive Director, Health GAP

Aaron Oxley, Executive Director, RESULTS UK

Thiru Balasubramaniam, Managing Director, KEI Europe

Dr Alice Welbourn, Founding Director, Salamander Trust

Edwin J Bernard, Executive Director, HIV Justice Network

Professor Brook K. Baker, Health GAP (Global Access Project)

Rosemary Mburu, Executive Director, WACI Health

Robin Montgomery, Executive Director, Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD)

Simon Collins, HIV i-Base

Dr Vincent Manning, Exec. Director, Catholics for AIDS Prevention & Support (CAPS)

Cedric Nininahazwe, Director of Programme, Management and Governance, Y+ Global

Midnight Poonkasetwattana, Executive Director APCOM

Emma Bell

Fiona Hale, Researcher, Salamander Trust and Making Waves Network Making Waves

James Baer

Dr. Mohga Kamal-Yanni, Global health consultant

Chaitra Dinesh, Students for Global Health

Endy Fekadu, Volunteer Health Services(VHS)

Mr.A.Sankar, Executive Director EMPOWER INDIA

Nyasha Chingore, Programmes Lead, AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA)

Jholerina B Timbo, Founder, Wings To Transcend Namibia

Andrew Betts Director, Advantage Africa

Aditi Sharma, Activist

Godfrey Kammunda, Executive Director, Ladder for rural development

David Johnson, Chief Executive, Margaret Pyke Trust

Alex Sparrowhawk, Chair, UK Community Advisory Board (HIV Treatment Advocates Network)

Dr Jacqui Stevenson, Researcher and Advocate

David Deakin, Executive Director, Chasing Zero

Roy Trelvelion, HIV treatment information officer/peer support

Dr Kavian Kulasabanathan, Researcher and NHS A&E doctor, Knowledge Ecology International

Co-Exec Director, African Services Committee, Inc.

Alexandra de Kiewit, Intervenante et éducatrice en réduction des méfaits, CSA

Mr Maurice Greenham

Jose Mejia, HIV Peer Support Services Manager, METRO Charity

Co-chair of the working group all parliamentary group on adult social care/ co-chair of the National co-production advisory group, TLAP

Fiona Pettitt

Ms Emma Cole

Sophie Strachan, Director, Sophia Forum

Founder, Young women Empowerment Network

Wim Vandeveld, Liaison Officer, Communities Delegation Unitaid

Svitlana Moroz, Head of the Board, Eurasian Women's Network on AIDS

Jeff Acaba, PCASO

Obatunde Oladapo, Executive Director, PLAN Health Advocacy and Development Foundation (PLAN Foundation)

James Dunworth

Colin Capner ,MRCVS

Michael Harkin HIV and LGBTQ Practitioner, Renaissance UK

Mrs Ike Rachael, Counselor, Association of women living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria(ASWHAN)

Memory Sachikonye, Coordinator, UK Community Advisory Board (UK-CAB)

Mrs Ajibade Kehinde olubanke, Apin clinic Adeoyo hospital, Yemetu Ibadan

Vicky Lomas, Chair of Trustees, Plushealth

Jo Josh

Julie Reynolds

Mark Lewis

Wezi Thamm, WECARe plus

Mrs. Ayinde Abiola

KABASAMBO ESTER

Paul Clift

salami abosedede Adeoyo Grace Foundation

Susan Cole

4M Mentor Mothers Network CIC

Simon Horvat-Marcovic

Becky Walker

Ms Kimberly Springer, Trinidad and Tobago community for positive women.

Eva Dewa, IPPI (The association of Indonesian Positive Women)

Enama Jean Paul, Humanity First Cameroon Plus

Garry Brough, Lead for Peer learning, Partnerships and Policy, Positively UK

Rita Wahab, Regional Coordinator, MENA Rosa

Esmo Valérie MABA MOUKASSA, Chair CCM Congo, GFTAM Country Coordinating Mechanism, Congo

HER Voice Fund Ambassador, HER Voice Fund

Deepak Dhungel, AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) Asia Bureau

Georg Bröring, MA, BA Bröring Advice & Project Management

Mwebaze Joseph Abubanks Community Educator, Love to love organization

Dr Tristan Barber, Consultant Physician (Royal Free), Honorary Associate Professor (UCL)

Tatiana Goulart, National Manager, LetsStopAIDS

Tim Shand, Co-Director, ShandClarke consulting Ltd

Director, EATAN

Gemma Aallah, Research Fellow and person affected by HIV, Brighton and Sussex Medical School

Stephen Talugende

Dr Neal Russell, St George's University of London

Miss Afia Precious Simpande

Justine Mellor Advanced clinical practitioner, Manchester University Hospitals Foundation Trust

M R Nelson, Professor HIV medicine, Chelsea and Westminster hospital

Dr Fiona Burns, Clinical academic, University College London

Kneeshe Parkinson, Missouri State Lead PWN-USA Chapter, Positive Women's Network USA

Precious Kaniki, Communication Manager, Phenomenal Youths Association

Chantal Mukandoli, Co-Chair, ICWNA Canada

Aan S. Rianto, Founder, Jaringan Equals Indonesia