



Your Ref: TBA

Our Ref: PEPFAR/23

Date: 23 August 2023

The Speaker,

National Assembly of the Republic of Kenya
P.O. Box 41842 – 00100
Nairobi

Dear Rt. Hon. (DR.) Moses M. Wetang'ula, EGH, MP

RE: Protest against misinformation shared by Kenyan Members of Parliament to the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate about the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) funding in Kenya.

We, the undersigned, are civil society organizations, and community-based organizations working on HIV, health, and human rights in Kenya.

We wish to bring to your attention a letter dated June 6, 2023 (*Subject: PEPFAR and Africa's Values*) written to various leaders of the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate cautioning against the reauthorization of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) funding to Kenya on grounds that the “funding is supporting so-called family planning and reproductive health principles and practices, including abortion, that violate our core beliefs concerning life, family, and religion.” Notably, Mr. Speaker, the letter is signed by ten (10) Members of Parliament from Kenya as follows: Hon. Paul Katana, Hon. George Kaluma, Hon. Joyce Kamene, Hon. Charles Nguna, Hon. Caroline Ngelechei, Hon. Suzanne Kiamba, Hon. Beatrice Ogola, Hon. Farah Maalim, and Hon. Joseph Kahangara. (See attached said letter for your reference)

Mr. Speaker, we express deep concern that our own Members of Parliament are involved in a scheme to spread misinformation about the impact, utility, and focus areas of PEPFAR funding in Kenya. Their action may result in PEPFAR funding being discontinued in Kenya which would jeopardize the lives of over 55 million Kenyans who benefit from HIV programs supported by PEPFAR as well as more than 1.6 million people living with HIV in Kenya.

Mr. Speaker, PEPFAR as a U.S. government's global effort to combat HIV and the largest global health program devoted to a single disease, is credited with saving millions of lives, and helping to change the trajectory of the global HIV epidemic.¹ It

¹ See [The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief \(PEPFAR\) | KFF](#)



was announced in January 2003 during President George W. Bush’s State of the Union and authorized by Congress that same year through the Leadership Act. Congress has updated, extended, and made changes to the program through the Lantos-Hyde Act of 2008, the PEPFAR Stewardship Act of 2013, and the PEPFAR Extension Act of 2018, which goes through financial year 2023.

This year, Congress will consider reauthorization of PEPFAR for a fourth time.²

Mr. Speaker, the gains Kenya has realized, two decades after PEPFAR was introduced are great. The program has continuously met the needs of millions of Kenyans by providing lifesaving drugs which were previously beyond reach. From the current funding landscape in Kenya, without PEPFAR support, millions of lives would be at risk. **For instance, in the 2023 financial year, PEPFAR plans to invest over 347 million US dollars in Kenya.**³

Mr. Speaker, PEPFAR has since 2003 worked in Kenya to ensure access to life-saving antiretroviral treatment (ART) for men, women and children; pregnant women know their HIV status and HIV-positive pregnant women receive antiretroviral to reduce risk of mother-to-child transmission during pregnancy and delivery; voluntary medical male circumcision for HIV prevention for men; caring for Orphans and Vulnerable Children; HIV testing and counseling (HTC); providing health care work staff across Kenya, including Clinical, Community, Program Management; as well as HIV Comprehensive Care Clinics.⁴

Mr. Speaker, it is apparent that without PEPFAR, Kenya will have a major funding gap on these programs. Further, none of these funding areas violate “our core beliefs concerning life, family and religion” as alleged by our Members of Parliament in their letter dated June 6, 2023.

Renewal of PEPFAR:

Mr. Speaker, as the PEPFAR program is now set for renewal, we are apprehensive that the claims by our Members of Parliament in the aforementioned letter may jeopardize reauthorization of the program. The authors of the letter, our own Members of Parliament, are expressing baseless claims which would cost Kenya funding for services such as testing, diagnosing, prevention and, majorly, the dispensing of

² See [The U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief \(PEPFAR\) | KFF](#)

³ [PEPFAR-Factsheet-2023.pdf \(getusinfo.com\)](#)

⁴ [PEPFAR-Factsheet-2023.pdf \(getusinfo.com\)](#)



antiretroviral medicines. Notably, the support from PEPFAR is needed in continuing the fight against HIV and AIDS in Kenya.

Mr. Speaker, our Members of Parliament have the means to verify the programs that PEPFAR is funding in Kenya but instead of doing so chose to spread misinformation to the US House of Representatives and Senate.

Our Call:

Mr. Speaker, in exercise of our constitutional rights, we call upon your office to urgently clarify whether the Members of Parliament of Kenya who authored the letter dated June 6, 2023, did so to communicate the position of the National Assembly on the matter to the U.S. Counterparts.

Mr. Speaker, we call upon your office to clarify to Kenyans the National Assembly position on the suspension of PEPFAR funding to Kenya.

Mr. Speaker, we call upon your office and the National Assembly to ascertain the purpose and programs funded by PEPFAR in Kenya and provide information to your counterpart in the U.S.

Mr. Speaker, the treacherous act of our Members of Parliament to misinform the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate ought to be called out.

We are united in calling upon the U.S Congress to fully reauthorize PEPFAR.

Sincerely,

This letter is endorsed by the following organizations:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Women Fighting AIDS in Kenya (WOFAK) | 7. Kenya Legal and Ethical Issues Network on HIV and AIDS (KELIN) |
| 2. Ringa Women Fighting Aids Group | 8. The Health NGOs Network |
| 3. Most at Risk Young Mothers and Teenage Girls living with HIV Initiative (MOYOTE) | 9. Men living with HIV/AIDS TESO |
| 4. Focus on Families and Christians Living with HIV in Kenya CBO | 10. The Eagles for Life Kenya |
| 5. Trust for Indigenous Culture and Health (TICAH) | 11. Nyakungru Health and Social Justice Center |
| 6. East Africa Legal Service Network | 12. Lake Victoria Initiatives |
| | 13. Light youth group CBO |
| | 14. Western Kenya Feminist Forum. |
| | 15. VOBI+254 |
| | 16. COSWA-Kenya |



17. Survivors Organization Busia
18. Hope Trans Initiative
19. Advocates of Hope for Community
20. Nyabende Support Programmes CBO
21. Good Health Community Programmes Kakamega
22. Beyond Initiative for Social Concern
23. WOPLAH CBO
24. Lean on Me Foundation
25. Nelson Mandela TB HIV Information CBO
26. Pema Kenya
27. Africa Media Trust (AMT)
28. Nkoko Iju Africa Mombasa
29. Seme Community Paralegal Association
30. Nyando Social Justice CBO
31. Trust Five Self Help Support Group
32. Community Led Solutions CBO
33. Ishtar
34. Kuza Trust
35. Wote Youth Development Projects
36. ReBuilding Community Organization
37. Smart Widows Support System
38. Emac
39. Queer Collective
40. Fountain of Hope CBO
41. Emmanuel Community Development PLHIV Network Homa Bay
42. We Top for Health CBO
43. Kajiado East Health Heroes Network
44. Hapa Kenya
45. Tuko Kazi Self Help Group
46. Rural to global organization
47. Loving Sisters CBO
48. Lake Victoria Initiatives
49. Kenya Human Rights Commission
50. Raise Your Voice CBO

For more information or clarifications about this statement email: info@kelinkenya.org

cc:

Hon. Nakhumicha S. Wafula

Cabinet Secretary for Health
Ministry of Health
P. O. Box 30016-00100
Nairobi

Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u, CBS

The Cabinet Secretary, National Treasury
Harambee Avenue, Treasury Building
P.O Box 30007-00100
Nairobi

Brian Rettmann

PEPFAR Kenya Country Coordinator
United States Mission to Kenya

Dr. Ruth Laibon-Masha (PhD)

CEO, National Syndemic Diseases Control Council (NSDCC)
Landmark Plaza, 9th Floor, Argwings Kodhek Road
P.O. Box 61307 – 00200,
Nairobi, Kenya

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy

Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC
20515

+254-788-220 300
+254 (020) 2515790

Karen C, Kuwinda Lane, Off Langata Road.
PO. Box 112-00202 KNH Nairobi, Kenya

Email: info@kelinkenya.org