

UNAIDS COUNTRY COORDINATOR MEETS FIRST LADY

The First Lady of the Republic of Ghana, Mrs. Lordina Dramani Mahama, has accepted an invitation from the UNAIDS Country Coordinator in Ghana, Mr. Girmay Haile, to be a Premiere Ambassador for the UNAIDS Global Plan to “Eliminate Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV (eMTCT) and Keep Mothers Alive” in Ghana. Mr Haile extended the invitation on behalf of the UNAIDS Executive Director, Mr Michel Sidibe.

Mr. Haile made the request, when he paid a courtesy call, along with the Director General of the Ghana AIDS Commission, on the First Lady at her residence in Accra on April 09, 2013. The UNAIDS Country Coordinator took the opportunity to brief Mrs. Mahama on the role of First Ladies in this assignment and about the Organisation of African First Ladies against AIDS (OAFLA).



Her Excellency Mrs Lordina Mahama in conversation with Mr. Girmay Haile

African First Ladies, as members of OAFLA, significantly enhance the political and leadership commitment to HIV. As a result, UNAIDS considers First Ladies as critical partners in advancing the national and continental agenda on AIDS. Mr. Haile expressed his strong belief that “such high level political commitment would provide strategic contribution to the achievement of the Global Plan to virtually eliminate vertical infection of HIV between now and 2015, both in Ghana and the African Continent”.

He added that as Premiere Ambassador, Her Excellency Mrs. Mahama would spearhead the Global Plan; empowering women and girls, challenging stigma, and helping national and community leaders understand that the AIDS response cannot be separated from the work to improve the health of mothers and children”.

In her capacity as lead national champion for eMTCT, Mr. Haile said “he has no doubt that she will be a charismatic leader to get the country prioritize eMTCT and march towards an AIDS-free generation by providing women and girls with better tools to protect themselves from HIV and gender based violence”. He reaffirmed the belief of UNAIDS that “we must boldly and unapologetically focus on women, girls and young people if we want to pursue our dream of a country and continent free from HIV”.

Her Excellency Mrs. Lordina Dramani Mahama, thanked Mr. Girmay Haile and UNAIDS for the invitation. She also expressed her appreciation to UNAIDS for its strong and long-term support to Ghana and the national HIV response and for working with the Ghana AIDS Commission and other relevant government and national partners effectively.

Mrs Mahama said, government is committed to supporting the efforts of the Ghana AIDS Commission and the National AIDS Control Programme to achieve the target of zero new HIV infections, zero AIDS related deaths and discrimination. She made a case for “men to take the prevention of HIV seriously and support the women so that together we can have a society free of HIV”.

Dr Angela EL-Adas, Director General of the Ghana AIDS Commission reaffirmed the Commission's support for the role the First Lady will be playing. She also expressed her appreciation for the role being played by the UN System in Ghana in its coordinated support for the national HIV response.



H.E. Mrs Lordina Mahama, First Lady of the Republic of Ghana with Mr Girmay Haile, UNAIDS Country Coordinator and Dr Angela El-Adas, Director General of the Ghana AIDS Commission