

**Commission on the Status of Women  
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**PANEL**

**The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men including  
caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS**

**Written statement\***

**Submitted by**

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\* The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

## WOMEN CARE- CAN MEN SHARE?

### Sharing of responsibilities between women and men in the context of HIV/AIDS

Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen,

My reflections and comments will be based on three elements of my personal and professional experience:

1. The experience of responding to my husband's AIDS diagnosis in 1986 by setting up TASO in Uganda which has turned out to be the largest indigenous care and support organization for people and families with HIV/AIDS in Uganda, in Africa and from which the world has learned so much about compassionate care.
2. My involvement with a unique global initiative by UNAIDS known as the Global coalitions on Women and AIDS: I will make particular reference to the recent review of Progress in 9 countries in southern Africa participating in the UN SG's Task Force on Women Girls and HIV/AIDS (*Bostwana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe*)
3. My current experience in setting up a model program of response to the needs of children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS in Malawi. The "Funders collaborative for children in Malawi is a joint venture of four foundations: Elton John Foundation, the Diana Princess of Wales Fund, Comic relief and the Children investment Fund Foundation in support of the Malawi government National plan of action for

What we know today about the HIV/AIDS pandemic is not good news:

- ❌ **Despite promising developments to address the AIDS epidemic, the number of people living with HIV continues to rise in every region in the world**
- ❌ More adult women than ever before are now living with HIV (15.4 million) – nearly 50% of the global total
- ❌ It is estimated that 15.4 million women are living with HIV in 2007, compared to 13.8 million in 2001. Women represent nearly 50% of people living with AIDS globally, and this ratio remained stable between 2001 and 2007
- ❌ In Sub-Saharan Africa, 61% of adults living with HIV are women
- ❌ In the Caribbean, 43% of adults living with HIV in 2007 are women compared with 37% in 2001
- ❌ In Asia, the figure is 29% in 2007 compared with 26% in 2001
- ❌ In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, it is estimated women account for 26% of adults living with HIV in 2007 (23% in 2001)
- ❌ Three quarters of all adult women living with HIV reside in Sub-Saharan Africa; nearly 61% of all adults living with HIV in the region are women
- ❌ Nearly 3 out of 4 young people (15-24 years) in SSA living with HIV are female
- ❌ In parts of Southern Africa, prevalence rates among young women (15-24) attending antenatal clinics are as high as 30%-40%
  
- ❌ Across the region, women are more likely than men to be infected with HIV, and are more likely to be the ones caring for people infected with HIV

But there is hope!

- ❖ In Sub-Saharan Africa, HIV epidemics are following divergent trends, with evidence of diminishing or stable HIV spread in most east African and west African countries, but signs of expanding epidemics in others
- ❖ Since 2003 there has been a significant change in terms of recognition of gender inequality as a major driver of the epidemic in the region (in particular: violence, economic dependence, intergenerational and transactional sex, multiple concurrent partnerships)-This recognition sadly has not turned into programmatic actions.
- ❖ There is love there is care, and increasing access to treatment- Women care, they love to care; but the question is do men share?,
- ❖ The good news is yes, some men share, some men care- but they are too few to make a difference.

I would like to propose a proactive approach to ensuring more sharing from men: Let's celebrate , develop role models, and provide appropriate spaces for men who care and share:

- ❖ Older men who say "no" to sex with underage girls,
- ❖ Married men who bring condoms home- "adultery is sinful, but coupled with unprotected sex it turns into murder"
- ❖ Men who provide bus fare for the spouse to go for her ARV refill
- ❖ Men who baby sit while the spouse goes to hospital
- ❖ Men who decide that their girl child will go stay and complete school.
- ❖ Men who decide that their girl child will inherit property
- ❖ Men who repair the "bicycle ambulance" for the Mponella home based care group in Malawi.
- ❖ The list goes on .....

Thank you.