



TANZANIA AIDS FORUM (TAF)

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STATEMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS DURING OPENING
CEREMONY FOR BIENNIAL JOINT REVIEW ON HIV/AIDS
November 10th, 2008, UBUNGO PLAZA HOTEL

Statement by Dr. Peter Bujari, Chair

Hon. Guest of honor,
Representatives of heads of missions in Tanzania,
Representatives of government ministries,
The Executive Chair, TACAIDS,
Directors of department TACAIDS,
Representatives of various constituencies,
Invited guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to first thank TACAIDS for giving us this opportunity to make a statement at this important occasion. Allow me also on behalf of the board of Tanzania AIDS Forum and members, to recognize the performance of TACAIDS and more importantly its strategic efforts to ensure that planning; monitoring, review and evaluation are done in a participatory manner.

Hon. Guest of honor, Ladies and Gentlemen (all protocols observed),
TAF is an umbrella organization established two years ago and has 40 members who have signed memorandum of understanding located in more than ten region of Tanzania. The number is expected to grow significantly in the near future. Efforts to expand to cover the whole country will be underway after development of the strategic plan for 2009 to 2011, for which we request support from both government and development partners. We have also actively participated in a number of policy reviews and we are in the process of popularizing some of them for a wider audience. We are happy about achievement so far, and optimistic about the future especially into being key stakeholder to recon with in an efforts to halt and reverse HIV pandemic in Tanzania.

Hon. Guest of honor, Ladies and Gentlemen,
There are a number of reasons why many CSOs are not yet members, and we request government's support to address some of these. To mention but a few, we have a Memorandum of Understanding which provides for rights on one part, and duties and

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Members of Board of Directors

NETWO+, CONCERN, TAWG, CCT, BAKWATA, TNW+, TANOPHA, HDT, CHAWATA, TANESA

responsibilities on another part, once signed. Some of the duties of members include submitting/sharing their reports and updates including financial reports on an annual basis. Members also expect organizational gain mainly in financial terms (eg. grants for projects), which the forum hardly has the capability to provide; at any rate. When it comes to financial resources, the Forum can only link members to sources of resources, and even that will require time to take effect as we are still building the foundation. Since membership is voluntary, CSOs do not find it necessarily important to join the forum until such time as it is able to give them ‘tangible’ benefits, which is quite ironical since the latter should indeed be a result of the former. The board believes that with support from government and development partners most of these issues can be addressed as it has worked in other East African countries.

Despite the above, CSOs have continued to take the lead role in community interventions including in prevention education, home based care, support to PLHIV, most vulnerable children and other vulnerable groups. However, PLHIV have continued to receive services that are not comprehensive; *inter alia*, ARVs with no home based care, lack of treatment for opportunistic infections, supportive counseling and nutrition, to mention only a few.

Participation in policy processes has intensified especially at national level, but it has remained weak at district and lower levels. Some of the reasons include the CBO’s capability to understand and articulate issues and acknowledge that having no pro-poor policies will directly impact on them achieving their aspirations. We are proud that CSOs work has been contributing to the NMSF although understanding of this document has remained superficial. Among CSOs themselves, there are a number of issues to be resolved, which we would recommend that government works with TAF to address them; they include the following:

- That some CSOs have poorly accounted for the funds received by them for public benefit;
- That some CSOs have felt that learning and sharing is not important and have continued to work in isolation further weakening the ‘Three Ones’ Principle; and
- That, in most cases, CSOs do not share their performance and they feel that they are not obliged to do that, perpetuating further the already uneasy a cold relationship between CSOs and LGA

Hon. Guest of honor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to critically analyze a few issues with regard to the work of CSOs and TAF’s recommendations for CSOs to accomplish their duties as stipulated in Joint Assistance strategy for Tanzania, Section 4.5, and I quote *verbatim*:-

. ...”CSO thus facilitates mutual accountability of the Government and Development Partners as well as domestic accountability of the Government. In turn, they are themselves accountable for their actions and public resource utilisation to their constituents and to the Government. In addition, they engage in

dialogue with the Government, Development Partners, consolidate and present community views to the Government and Development Partners. They also serve as domestic and international advocates for development and aid effectiveness, stimulate public debate and raise understanding on these issues.....”

For CSOs to accomplish the above, the critical issues below need to be addressed:

1. Purposeful resource allocation and technical assistance to CSOs for the purpose of strengthening coordination and self regulation, while keeping a distance and allow them to self coordinate
2. Provision of opportunities and resources to the networks and task them to ensure policies are popularized, disseminated amongst CSOs, communities and that most of their work is aligned to the national strategies
3. Development of an agreed strategic framework for the capacity building of CSOs and a move from un-targeted training to more strategic hands-on capacity building.
4. Making systems for resource allocation appropriate to community based organizations and using Kiswahili rather than English, and allocating resource for core costs rather than only funding project activities, which is unrealistic.
5. Develop clear information on processes and financial systems to access resources including the creation of a civil society fund. Also increase the financial resource allocation to districts, institute mechanisms to allow CSOs and LGA to work together and to enable CSOs to access resources at that level.
6. Accept a paradigm shift to acknowledge that CSOs are partners in development while they seek to maintain their autonomy and, legitimacy in the eyes of their members and communities at national and international level.

Hon. Guest of honor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The above sentiments are some of the basic principles summarized from a number of declarations and other commitment that this country has signed. They intend to consolidate the response and bring the main constituencies together to plan, manage, monitor and evaluate. If the above are done, key players will own the response with high degree of accountability to best serve this country.

Hon. Guest of honor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to finish my speech by reiterating the fact that we have the opportunity to make change and we all need to make use of it. Lastly, I will finish by this phrase: . **All of us..... together we are responsible for this nation.**

Thank you very much,

God bless Tanzania!