

**Statement of the Pan African Treatment Access Movement
Call Against Abstinence Only Policies
November 30, 2005**

Under pressure from the American program 'PEPFAR' (President's Emergency Plan For HIV/AIDS Relief), certain African countries have begun, little by little, to adopt a strategy through which the message 'abstinence and faithfulness' is advocated as the only way of preventing the HIV/AIDS epidemic, to the detriment of the universal promotion of the condom which remains to this day the most efficient means of protection against HIV transmission.

This is the case, for example, in Uganda, considered up until now as a model country in the fight against AIDS, where public AIDS programs now no longer systematically promote and distribute condoms as part of their mass prevention campaigns.

The responsibility of the American government and certain religious organisations must be called into question, the Bush Administration having over these past five years more than doubled the funds going to campaigns presenting abstinence and faithfulness as the best protection against AIDS. The American government will have already given 8 million dollars for this type of campaign in Uganda, yet with an estimated need of between 120-150 million condoms, less than 30 million will have been made available this year.

More recently, a call for proposals for USAID funding, launched October 5th 2005 in Mozambique, which aims to promote "abstinence, faithfulness, healthy behaviour and new community standards", stipulates clearly that "projects which include the distribution and/or the promotion of condoms, or ABC programs cannot be considered" for funding.

Faced with this situation, we denounce the ideology which governs the Washington program against AIDS (PEPFAR) and which is being imposed in our countries.

Instead of contributing positively to the fight against AIDS in our countries, this program will breed serious prejudices and will cause without doubt a large number of infections which would otherwise have not taken place. Infected people - considered as guilty of unhealthy behaviour - will more than ever be discriminated against, and the use of the condom will become a sign of immorality.

We reaffirm our commitment to promoting sex education, and to the use of male and female condoms, being the only efficient way up to now of preventing the transmission of the HIV virus.

We commit ourselves, in our respective countries, not to collaborate with programs advocating abstinence and faithfulness as the only means of prevention, whatever the aim or context of our interventions, and to continue with our efforts to see the systematic promotion of the condom within our communities.

Finally, we call upon donor countries and international agencies to coordinate their support and to encourage our efforts, and demand that partners in development not impose their ideology or their politics as a condition of their partnership. National governments must be free to apply the best strategies available to them in order to respond to the needs of their populations.