

V. BOTSWANA RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Government of Botswana:

I. Comprehensively Advance Women's Human Rights and Address Violations, Including:

A. Legal and Policy Reform to Eliminate Gender Discrimination

- Systematically end discrimination in marriage, inheritance, property and employment laws and harmonize laws with international human rights instruments. For example, legislation should establish uniform criteria for determining the validity of marriage, presumption of spousal co-ownership, equal division of property upon termination of marriage or death and equal rights to own property and land irrespective of marital status; employment law should cover equity in wages, discriminatory dismissals and sexual harassment.
- Enact the pending Domestic Violence Bill to end impunity for gender-based violence and ensure women recourse and protection from violence in all its forms; strengthen the current bill so that it covers marital rape and includes the provision of shelter for survivors and training of police officers.

B. Dissemination of Information and Assistance Regarding Recourse for Rights Violations

- Implement, enforce and publicize reforms, including those that have already been made, such as the abolition of marital power, and educate the public and private sector and communities on their implications.
- Increase knowledge of and access to legal remedies and victims' services, including providing legal aid and sensitizing law enforcement agencies and the judiciary through training programs.
- Support short-term safety nets for women who are the victims of violence, abandonment, disinheritance or other acute abuses through the provision of post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV and shelter and other emergency services and care, in partnership with civil society organizations.

C. Popular and Civic Education to Change Gender Norms

- Incorporate comprehensive sexuality education, gender and human rights awareness into basic educational curricula with the goal of changing norms and expectations and promoting equality regarding male and female social roles, including in intimate relationships.
- Conduct outreach to radio, print and television media to:
 - Reinforce positive messages and marginalize stereotypes;
 - Challenge gender-discriminatory attitudes;
 - Broaden the public health discourse to include discussion of relationship power dynamics and healthy sexuality (i.e., targeting social norms that sanction men's behavior, challenging gender roles, increasing risk perceptions and presenting supportive male and empowered female role models).

D. Reform and Strengthening of the Women's Affairs Department (WAD)

- WAD should support the organization by civil society of the women's movement in Botswana and partner with civil society organizations, including in the drafting of the gender policy and the CEDAW report.
- WAD should support documentation of experiences of gender discriminatory practices to inform policy-making and implementation in the public and private sectors.

II. Mitigate Poverty and Meet Basic Needs By:

In the Short-Term:

- Expand existing aid programs to assist vulnerable populations, in particular PLWA and poor women, to meet basic needs for food sufficiency, potable water and irrigation, and shelter:
- Food should meet the needs of HIV-positive persons;
- Programs should feed the whole family of a vulnerable person.

In the Medium- and Long-Terms:

- Address the underlying causes of food insufficiency and failure to meet other basic needs, and recognizing that women and girls disproportionately experience poverty and the burdens of care-giving, by providing skills training and sustainable programs directed at creating economic opportunities particularly for women, PLWA and families affected by HIV/AIDS.
 - Ensure access to loans, credit and training (e.g., marketing, entrepreneurship, business skills) through microfinance projects;
 - Fund local employment and educational/training opportunities, particularly for and led by women, such as community-based income-generation projects;
 - Create legal protections for women in the informal economy.

III. Eradicate HIV/AIDS-Related Stigma and Discrimination Through:

A. Strengthening Leadership and Legal/Policy Reform for Support and Protection of Affected Persons

- Parliament should adopt comprehensive legislation and policy addressing HIV/AIDS and employment, and strengthen enforcement of prohibitions, including: non-discrimination, job security, testing prohibitions, confidentiality, care and support of HIV-positive workers and workplace-based prevention programs.
- Church leaders should end complicity in stigmatization and play educational roles to support gender equality and end discriminatory customary practices in marriage and other areas.
- Traditional leaders should endorse programs that promote gender equality; ensure access by community to testing and treatment; and denounce, discourage and transform harmful customary practices.
- All sector ministries should set, fund, monitor and be held accountable for meeting gender equality objectives as part of the national HIV/AIDS strategy.

B. Challenging Prejudices and Closing Information and Services Gaps

With Regard to Information/Education:

- Work with PLWA groups and other civil society organizations to create or adapt and widely disseminate information on testing, prevention and treatment.

These should be accessible materials that address information gaps, such as:

- Men's denial, fear and/or lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS;
 - HIV-positive women's needs;
 - Treatment literacy and preparedness, including information targeted at men both as patients and partners.
- Adapt a systematic and coordinated approach to public education, addressing key knowledge areas of prevention, support and rights, including messages that:
 - Address risk, vulnerability and fear of stigma directly and integrate gender concerns into prevention messages (i.e. forced sex, power in relationships);
 - Target people's misperceptions concerning HIV transmission, condom effectiveness and other topics.

With Regard to Testing and Health Services:

- Address the knowledge and resource gaps in the implementation of routine testing by training health workers, monitoring implementation, systematically evaluating programmatic impacts and incorporating participation and feedback by affected populations.
- Support those seeking testing with campaigns, resources to overcome barriers such as lack of food or transport, and protection from discrimination and partner violence through guidelines and training for health workers.
- Ensure the "three Cs" are safeguarded with respect to all forms of testing: confidentiality, counseling and informed consent.
- Identify and close other services gaps, including meeting men's and women's reproductive and sexual health needs, and implement human rights training for health workers.

To the US Government:

Expand and Reform PEPFAR to Increase Effectiveness and Promote Human Rights:

- In PEPFAR reauthorization legislation, clearly identify gender inequality as a key issue propelling the AIDS pandemic, and require that a gender focus be incorporated into PEPFAR-funded prevention, treatment and care programs.

- Foster integration between PEPFAR and development programs focused on health, education, poverty reduction, and respect for women's rights.
- Increase PEPFAR's investment in programs that promote women's and girls' access to income and resources, support primary and secondary education for girls and strengthen women's legal rights.
- Coordinate PEPFAR's programming with other bilateral and multilateral development programs promoting gender equality.
- Initiate and support programs that address the link between food insufficiency and women's vulnerability to HIV infection.
 - Support the expansion of existing programs to help PLWA and poor women obtain food, shelter, and potable water.
- Invest in locally produced television and radio public education messages that focus on the availability of voluntary and confidential HIV testing and treatment.
- Invest in the local development of programs that eliminate discriminatory attitudes toward women and promote gender equality.
- Foster participation of women in national AIDS policy making and implementation.
 - Fund women's and PLWA organizations and facilitate the establishment of networks to strengthen organizational capability and contribute to a corps of skilled women leaders, especially women living with HIV/AIDS.

To All Donors:

Support the Government of Botswana to Meet These Goals and Build Complementary Capacity in Civil Society:

For Gender Reform:

- Provide training, technical assistance and financial resources to women's organizations and other civil society actors to undertake advocacy, civic education and popular campaigns promoting women's legal rights and empowerment, including:
 - Advocacy for the Domestic Violence Bill and other legal reform measures;
 - Shelter, legal aid and other emergency services and care for women or PLWA who are victims of violence, abandonment, disinheritance or other acute abuses;

- Skills training and sustainable programs directed at creating economic opportunities for women, PLWA and families affected by HIV/AIDS;
- Training on women's rights, gender sensitivity and human rights, to decrease vulnerabilities and dispel myths regarding HIV/AIDS for various sectors, including media, employers, educational institutions and health care workers.
- Mobilize resources, including financial, informational and technical assistance to build skills and capacity in the Ministries, Attorney General's Office and Parliament to draft and implement gender reforms.

For Food Sufficiency:

- Increase food aid and aid for other basic needs through, for example:
 - Support for farming cooperatives, extension schools, new agricultural initiatives such as community gardens and low-labor/high nutrition crops;
 - Meals provision at school, work, empowerment programs and ARV treatment centers and through community health worker and home-based care visits;
 - Support for legal aid projects to assist in securing productive property for widows, orphans and PLWA.

For HIV/AIDS Programming that Respects, Protects and Promotes Human Rights:

- Support the Government in designing, implementing and monitoring testing programs to ensure the "3 Cs" (confidentiality, counseling and informed consent).
- Support, encourage, and, if possible, mandate government and civil society partnerships and coordination in gender, reproductive/sexual health and HIV/AIDS policymaking and programs.
- Support PLWA organizations and networks to increase their visibility and services by funding the coordination and expansion of national networks, training officers for NGOs and support capacity building for community mobilization efforts.