



World Health
Organization

WHO Country Office LESOTHO

NEWSBRIEF- WORLD AIDS DAY 2011

World Health Organization, UN House, 13 UN Road, P O Box 214, Maseru 100, Lesotho.
Email: wholesotho@ls.afro.who.int; Phone: +266 22 31 2122; Fax: +266 22 31 0213
WHO Representative: Dr Jacob Mufunda

LESOTHO CELEBRATES WORLD AIDS DAY 2011



His Majesty opens the event by candle lighting ceremony



From left Right Hon. Prime Minister and First Lady join in their Majesties King Letsie III and Queen 'Masenate in candle lighting ceremony

The World AIDS Day (WAD) national commemoration was marked on the 1st December, 2011 at Ha Mabote in Maseru District. The theme for this year is "Getting to zero: zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS related deaths". This occasion was graced by the presence of the Head of State His Majesty, King Letsie the III and her Majesty Queen, 'Masenate Bereng Seeiso, The Right Honourable Prime Minister, Dr Pakalitha Mosisili, the Honourable Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Honourable Ministers of Natural Resources, Foreign Affairs, Local Government, Gender, Forestry and Land Reclamation, Education and Training, Tourism and Environment, Communications, Science and Technology, members of the Diplomatic missions, the UN Resident Coordinator, the WHO Representative represented by Family Health Programme Officer, and other UN Heads of Agencies. Church leaders, the Principal Chief of Maqhaka, Community Counselors, Schools, Organizations of People Living with HIV and AIDS, media and the wider communities were also attending the celebration.



The Honorable Minister of Health and Social Welfare, delivering a speech during WAD 2011



The UN Resident Coordinator delivering a speech on behalf of the UN during WAD 2011



His Majesty, King Letsie the III, delivering a key note address during WAD 2011

Exhibition on stalls were assembled around the celebrations grounds. These included special services given to all on HIV testing and counseling including dissemination of HIV prevention, treatment and care. WHO materials e.g. posters, flyers, and books were distributed to the public in the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare stall.

Wide ranging speeches were delivered by key policy makers on the occasion. These included the President of People living with HIV and AIDS, the UN Resident Coordinator and the Honourable Minister of Health and Social Welfare. Addressing the public in this occasion Dr Ramatlapeng indicated that Lesotho this week held the country's first ever National HIV prevention Symposium, which sought to revitalize the prevention of new HIV infections currently estimated at 18 000 per year.

The Honourable Minister of Health and Social Welfare stressed that the health sector is ready to renew efforts to fight the epidemic and strengthen partnership with sectors such as youth who happen to be one of the most vulnerable groups we have to protect. Their enthusiasm about participating in the fight against HIV, breathes hope, she concluded. Her remarks were followed by a declaration of commitment signed by the Right Honorable Prime Minister and their Majesties in scaling up zero new infections, zero discrimination and zero related AIDS deaths by 2015.

The highlight was key note remarks made by His Majesty King Letsie III, " *We have gathered here to take stock of progress made in HIV work, from the foregoing let me express my gratitude to all of you present and applaud everyone for the remarkable stride made in the fight against HIV. These include commendable efforts in scaling up HIV prevention revitalization. However I note with concern that the pandemic is no longer regarded as a crisis based on the scale it is ravaging our society; I therefore urge all of you to roll up your sleeves and double up our efforts in reducing the number of new HIV infections as the theme of the day clearly states.*"



The Right Hon. Prime Minister delivers remarks during the event

In conclusion I appeal to you, individually and collectively to access HIV prevention services at our disposal. We will be able to treat those affected living openly with HIV with more care and compassion ". He concluded.

HIV testing and counseling services were freely offered to the public. Streams of queues for people who eagerly came forth to know their HIV status was witness during the event. This was flavored by traditional educational and entertainment activities.



The Minister of Health and Social Welfare presents strategic plan for elimination of mother to child transmission of HIV and for paediatric HIV care ,treatment His Majesty



The Right Hon. Prime Minister signs declaration of commitment on Zero new HIV infections



Their Majesties and other dignitaries taken on a guided tour of stalls during the event



His Majesty King Letsie signs declaration of commitment on zero new HIV infections

Pictures below show educational and entertainment activities performed during the WAD 2011 (these include cutting of the balloon ribbon by His Majesty, depicting this year's theme as well as dance done by youth and police brass band).

