



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date: 08<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

#### **Framework for Dialogue National Meeting**

#### **Faith on the Fast Track: Eliminating HIV Stigma and Discrimination through Love and Dialogue within Faith Communities**

A total of 120 participants, comprised of religious leaders from various faith communities, people living with HIV (PLHIV), adolescents and young people, representatives of government institutions and development partners, gathered for an interfaith dialogue on the Fast Track mission to end HIV related stigma and discrimination, on 7 and 8 February 2017, in Nairobi, Kenya.

The meeting was part of the collaborative engagement geared towards implementing the Joint Actions that were developed in 2015 at the first Framework for Dialogue meeting. The participants reviewed progress made on the reduction of stigma and discrimination in Kenya, using the Framework for Dialogue tool<sup>1</sup>; undertook an evaluative dialogue of the Joint Actions agreed in 2015 to address the gaps; and developed a joint action plan for stronger partnerships between religious leaders, PLHIV, adolescents, young people, and other stakeholders.

*“UNAIDS values the partnership with faith communities because religious leaders are critical partners in the Fast Track agenda to end AID, serving as a key entry point to challenge HIV-related stigma”, Dr. Jantine Jacobi, UNAIDS Country Director, Kenya.*

Adolescents and young people actively contributed to the discussion challenging religious leaders to engage with them through love and dialogue.

*“We share our experiences of living with HIV, not to draw pity but encourage you to learn something about other young people going through the same experiences within your communities. There is life after an HIV diagnosis”, Joyce Ouma, Sauti Skika network of young people living with HIV.*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.frameworkfordialogue.org/>

The participants committed to break the silence about HIV Stigma and sexual and gender-based violence among faith communities and facilitate dialogue at different levels, while creating safe spaces for dialogue among people living with HIV, adolescents, and young people. The participants agreed to undertake joint advocacy to ensure access to treatment for children and adolescents living with HIV, the development of an age appropriate sexuality curriculum; and sustained HIV financing. The joint action plan adopted will be reviewed after one year.

*“Religious leaders have to lead by example. We must test for HIV in order to help other people. We have to continue advocating for dialogue in families, and in prayer houses to reach the faith communities with stigma free messages”,*  
Archbishop Benjamin Nzimbi Emeritus, Patron of INERELA+Kenya.

*“The challenge of HIV remains embedded within our communities. We cannot do things the same way; we must stop HIV stigma; we must dialogue with young people at all levels to make sure that we can save a generation. We have a task ahead of us”,* Sheikh Shalif, Lamu, Kenya.

*“The Framework for Dialogue in Kenya has demonstrated the great potential of bringing at the same table religious leaders, PLHIV, young people, adolescents and governments’ representatives to shift ideas and perception; and it has facilitated open collaboration against stigma and discrimination”,* Francesca Merico, WCC-Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, Switzerland.

