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April 11, 2007

Hon Ronald Mukuma MP.
Minister of Labour
Lusaka

Dear Honorable Mukuma,

The government, through the adoption of National HIV/AIDS Policy has demonstrated its obligation to reduce the impact of HIV and AIDS. The government is demonstrating its commitment to respond to the challenges brought about by HIV/AIDS in many ways. It has for example, made available antiretroviral treatment free to people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA).

However, in addressing the problems of HIV- related stigma, shame and discrimination, and cultural and gender issues associated with high-risk sexual behavior the nation has been less effective. The need to deal with issues related to sex, gender, children and AIDS is greatest in rural and in places where people are living in poverty. It is in these places where also, the FBOs, CBOs, NGOs and local government leaders have insufficient information and knowledge about government's intentions in the fight against stigma and discrimination.

Jubilee Centre in partnership with PACT/Zambia held a workshop at Kabompo East Constituency for thirty people representing the local government (Councilors), FBOs, CBOs and NGO leaders. His Royal Highness Senior Chief Sikufele also attended the workshop that was held for the purpose of improving HIV/AIDS policy analysis and influencing the development of policies that protect PLWHA against stigma and discrimination and that also address the issues of quality, availability, and accessibility of VCT and ART services, at Suwuluka Guest House from 26th to 28th March.

At the conclusion of this workshop the participants formed a Constituency Liaison Committee whose responsibilities include:

- Report to the MP through the constituency office all the issues of HIV/AIDS, stigma and discrimination and service delivery
- Discuss HIV/AIDS issues in the constituency
- Advocate for improved HIV/AIDS service delivery, better practices (Policies) that are against stigma and discrimination
- Monitor the implementation of HIV/AIDS Policy and report through the constituency office to the MP any shortfall.

I am enclosing herein the declaration that the CLC committee came up with for your information and action. They are particularly calling on you to use your influence to facilitate for the establishment of VCT facilities at the following Rural Health Centres:

1. Kasamba RHC stage 2
2. Kashinakazhi
3. Dyambombola.

In addition they are calling on you to lobby for the legislation of policies they have identified so that protection of Human Rights in the fight against HIV/AIDS is upheld.

We pray that God will give you wisdom as you provide leadership in the fight against HIV/AIDS for the people of Kabompo East Constituency. Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned for further information.

Yours truly,

Lawrence Temfwe
Executive Director.

CC. CLC Committee and participants.
CC. Minister of Health
CC. Provincial Health Director
CC. Director DHMT Kabompo
CC. District Aids Task Force Chairperson Kabompo.
CC. His Royal Highness Senior Chief Sifukele.