
OAFLA Uganda

Regional Campaigns on the

Elimination of Mother to

Child Transmission

Report

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Acronyms

ADPs	AIDS Development Partners
ARV	Anti Retroviral
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
DHO	District Health Officer
EMTCT	Elimination of Mother To Child Transmission
MOH	Ministry of Health
MTCT	Mother To Child Transmission
OAFLA	Organisation of African First Ladies Against HIV and AIDS
SMS	Safe Male Circumcision
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendants
UAC	Uganda AIDS Commission
VHTs	Village Health Teams

1.0 Background

The HIV Programme of the First Lady's Office in Uganda operates as the Uganda Chapter of The Organisation of African First Ladies against HIV and AIDS in Africa (OAFLA). OAFLA is committed to contributing to efforts towards an AIDS free Africa.

The OAFLA Uganda Chapter is guided by the following Vision and Mission:

Vision: Zero new infections leading to an HIV Free Generation by 2020.

Mission: To provide political leadership and a strategic platform for stakeholder engagement and community mobilization, to ensure an effective HIV and AIDS response; towards an HIV free generation.

The First Lady was nominated the National EMTCT Champion in August 2012 and thereafter she embarked on Regional Campaigns to create awareness about EMTCT. These Campaigns are organised and coordinated by OAFLA UG in partnership with the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC), HIV/EMTCT stakeholders and the political leadership at all levels of Society.

The Campaigns created general awareness about effective HIV/EMTCT service delivery and specifically the need for leadership involvement, starting with male involvement in family reproductive health.

Some of the successes registered through these Campaigns are:

- Increased HIV/EMTCT service delivery and uptake as a result of engaging key high level stakeholders in consultations around a comprehensive four pronged approach to EMTCT. This approach focuses on: primary prevention, family planning, antenatal care, Option B+ and care for those infected and affected by the scourge;
- The recognition and motivation of high performing community based initiatives through visits by the Champion;
- Community-based sensitization rallies and one-on-one meetings with various stakeholders and;
- The dissemination of sensitization messages through Information, Education and Communication (IEC) channels including the media, brochures, fact sheets etc.

This Report highlights key aspects of these Regional Campaigns detailing activities held in the Regions and their outcomes.

1.1 Overall Objectives of the Regional Campaigns

The objectives of the Campaigns are to:

- Provide a strategic platform for stakeholder engagement and mutual accountability to ensure effective EMTCT service delivery.
- Contribute to increased access to EMTCT services through community mobilisation and sensitization.
- Promote EMTCT best practices through the demonstration and show casing of HIV prevention, care and treatment interventions.

These objectives have been achieved in all the regions resulting in scaled up service delivery and uptake by the majority of Ugandans.

2.0 The Public Rallies and Consultative Meetings

The EMTCT Regional Campaigns were held on the following dates:

- South Western Region – Ntungamo District 22nd March 2013
- Northern Region – Lira District 28th June 2013
- Eastern Region – Tororo District 16th August 2013
- Karamoja Region – Napak District 16th September 2013
- Kampala Region – Kampala 2nd March 2014
- West Nile Region – Arua District 13th June 2014
- Busoga Region – Jinja District 4th December 2014
- Mid- Western Region – Hoima District 23rd March 2015
- Teso Region – Soroti District 31st July 2015
- Central 1 & 2 Region- Masaka District 1st September 2015

The following activities were conducted during the Campaigns:

a) Public Rally and Media Campaigns:

In all the Regions, the Campaigns culminated in Mass Public Rallies with over 3,000 – 5,000 members of the public and key stakeholders from the various districts in attendance. During the Rallies the First Lady and EMTCT Champion visited stalls exhibiting work carried out by different organizations and institutions involved in the HIV response. The Champion also presented the key note message at all the rallies,

while other messages were delivered by Ministers, MPs, dignitaries, Development Partners and leaders from the region.

The Rallies were preceded by intensive media campaigns with messages on: HIV and AIDS awareness, the significance of Testing for HIV as couples and male involvement in reproductive health. Additionally, Implementing Partners, district leaders and Village Health Teams (VHTs) mobilised communities to attend the Rallies. The radio stations in the Regions also aired a Statement on EMTCT by the First Lady.

b) Consultative Meetings with Key Stakeholders:

Consultative Meetings were organized in each region to provide a forum for stakeholders to build synergies and engage on key issues impacting the Region. The Meetings were attended by Cabinet Ministers, MPs, Diplomats, UN agencies, Development Partners and officials from the UAC and the MOH. National and regional actors from the health sector, key stakeholders from the Region, political leaders, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and cultural and religious leaders were also in attendance.

The Consultative Meetings covered the following issues:

- **South Western Region:** The focus in Ntungamo District was on: *Enhanced Networking and Collaboration of Stakeholders.*
- **Northern Region:** The focus in Lira District was on: *The Role of Village Health Teams and Religious/Cultural Leaders in promoting EMTCT.*
- **Eastern Region:** The focus in Tororo District was on: *The Role of the Youth and Fathers in promoting EMTCT.*
- **Karamoja Region:** The focus in Napak District was on: *Re- engaging the District Leadership in the EMTCT response and HIV and AIDS Awareness Campaigns.*
- **Kampala Region:** The focus in Kampala District was on: *Assessing and enhancing EMTCT service delivery in Kampala*
- **West Nile Region:** The focus in Arua District was on: *Addressing cross boarder concerns in HIV/AIDS Response in the Region.*
- **Busoga Region:** The focus in Jinja District was on: *Addressing the drivers of Teenage Pregnancies in the Busoga Region.*
- **Mid- Western Region:** The focus in Hoima District was on: *Couple Testing: “Test together, Know Together, Disclose Together”.*

- **Soroti Region:** The focus in Soroti District was on: *“Keeping Families in Care”*
- **Central 1& 2 Region:** The focus in Masaka District was on *“Protecting our baby, our future”*

c) Other HIV and AIDS/EMTCT Activities conducted

In all the Regions the Campaigns were preceded by mass publicity and sensitization programmes.

The region specific activities of the Campaigns are highlighted in the table below:

A summary table of the activities held during the Campaigns

Region	Key Activities
South Western	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Launching Option B+ - Testimony from a couple living with HIV and AIDS
Northern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dialogue for Village Health Teams - Dialogue for Cultural and Religious Leaders - Presentations of Statements of Commitment to support EMTCT by VHTs, Cultural and Religious Leaders
Eastern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Life Skills Workshop for the Youth - Dialogue for Cultural and Religious Leaders - Statement of Commitment on EMTCT by the Youth - A husband's Statement of commitment to male involvement - Art exhibition on HIV and AIDS by the youth
Karamoja	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visit to a Health Center in Napak District - Dialogue for Cultural and Religious Leaders - Testimonies by mothers using Option B+ - Meritorious Award in honor of the Executive Director UNAIDS
Kampala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performing Artists shared EMTCT messages in the Public Rally - National Level Dialogue on EMTCT for Cultural and Religious Leaders - Meritorious Award to the Champion by AMMICAL - Public HIV Testing by H.E the President of Uganda, the EMTCT Champion and national leaders - Testimony by a young mother on success with Option B+
West Nile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Testimony by a young person born with HIV/AIDS - Dialogue for Cultural and Religious Leaders - An EMTCT Champion Mother's Pageant was organised to engage pregnant mothers in a competition on their knowledge regarding EMTCT, Antenatal Care and information sharing. - The Champion launched the Motorbike Ambulance Service and the MNH Convergence Programme to support expectant mothers. - Certificates of Recognition were presented by the Champion to the Best Performing District and health facility.

Busoga Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensitisation workshop for Cultural and Religious Leaders on EMTCT and HIV and AIDS - Briefing on the findings of the MPs Campaign against Teenage Pregnancies in the Busoga Region - Testimony of a Peer Educator from “Mothers to Mothers” Organisation - “Mothers our Heroes” Song: A young lady born with HIV’s song in appreciation of Mothers who heed the call on EMTCT. - Presentation of gifts to the EMTCT Champion for her commitment to fighting the HIV and AIDS Epidemic
Mid- Western Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A poem entitled “Listen to my Heart Speak”, in which a young girl living with HIV and AIDS shares about overcoming the discrimination, mockery and challenges of poor feeding faced by people living with HIV and AIDS. - A testimony by a couple living with HIV and AIDs who with the help of Option B plus, now have three HIV negative babies, - A visit by key stakeholders to His Highness the Omukama of Bunyoro to brief him about the Campaign and to mobilise the participation of his subjects through him. - A Religious and Cultural Leaders Dialogue at which among other things the participants were presented with the findings of the <i>Survey on Condom Use for HIV Prevention among Christian HIV Sero-Discordant and HIV Sero-Positive Concordant Married Couples in Uganda</i> conducted by Uganda Christian Action Network. - The Champion’s visit to Azur Christian Health Center IV in Hoima town, where she commissioned an Ultra Sound Scan Machine, visited expectant mothers admitted in the Maternity ward and witnessed couples attending antenatal clinic at the Health Center.
Teso Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Dialogue for Religious and Cultural Leaders to create awareness about EMTCT and to address key issues of concern regarding practices that hinder the response. - Commissioning of the Renovation of Health Center IVs in the Teso Region - Testimony of a Father on his role in the birth of his HIV Free baby girl - Testimonies of over 50 children born free of HIV
Central 1& 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Dialogue for Religious and Cultural Leaders to create awareness about EMTCT and to address key issues of concern regarding practices that hinder the response; and how best they can use their positions and mandate to ensure the spread of the EMTCT gospel. - Testimonies from two families that used the Option B plus and gave birth to babies free from HIV

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lady with visual disability shared about the trials of discrimination and the stigma of living with HIV and AIDS. - A message from the Women Living with HIV and AIDS; which drew the gatherings' attention to the need for an end to stigma and discrimination. - An appeal was made to Government to keep consulting the women affected by HIV and AIDS when planning programmes; concluding that "There can be nothing for us, without us." -
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3.0 Emerging Issues from the Consultative Meetings

While a number of strategies to address EMTCT were discussed during the Campaigns, below are key issues deliberated upon in the different regions:

South Western Region

- *Establishment of a Message Clearing House:* A clearing house for HIV and AIDS messages is required to ensure appropriate messages are sent out.
- *Enhanced Leadership involvement:* Leaders must speak out on HIV and AIDS and EMTCT to demonstrate Government's political regarding this cause.
- *Advocacy to support human resource:* Advocacy is required for the development of appropriate policies to support the human resource in the field of HIV.
- *Improved accountability:* There is need for improved efficiency and accountability in service delivery.

Northern Region

- *Capacity building for leaders:* Cultural and Religious Leaders must be trained and equipped to talk about HIV and AIDS/EMTCT from an informed point of view.
- *Motivation of VHTs:* The VHTs require motivation in terms of recognition of their successes and attention to their welfare.
- *Resources for Religious institutions:* Resources should be availed, including means of transport to enable religious leaders mobilise their communities.

- *The dissemination of messages on HIV and AIDS:* Appropriate and clear messages on the four prongs should be developed and disseminated; including primary prevention.

Eastern Region

- *Male Involvement Champions:* It is important to identify “Male Involvement Champions” in reproductive health to promote a positive response from men.
- *Enable the environment for male involvement:* Train health workers to adopt strategies to promote a positive environment tailored for men attending clinics with their spouses.
- *Promote youth friendly services:* Provide life skills and promote the involvement of youth in the response to HIV and AIDS.
- *Sensitize the Cultural and Religious leaders:* Ensure increased participation of Cultural and Religious Leaders in “Male Involvement” Campaigns.

Karamoja Region

- *Re –engagement of the Political Leadership:* Political and Cultural leaders should be re-engaged to share messages on HIV and AIDS.
- *Karamoja Specific Interventions:* The HIV and AIDS interventions in the Karamoja region must address the unique socio- cultural issues of the region.
- *Data collection on stocking of commodities:* It is important that data is gathered and shared to inform the stocking of commodities.
- *Adopt culturally relevant IEC messages:* There should be strong advocacy on EMTCT in the local language and through cultural entertainment.

Kampala Region

- *Engaging health providers in the private sector:* Engage the private sector health facilities, to provide incentives for women to do the HIV test.
- *Provision for Waiting Shelters for expectant mothers:* Waiting shelters for women should be considered as a means of increasing accessibility to health care for women, nearing the time of delivery.
- *The increasing urban population challenge:* The urban population is increasing consequently, pressure on health facilities. A long term strategy should be established to address the population challenge with a focus on accessibility by the vulnerable women.
- *Appropriate packaging of messages on male involvement:* Revisit the packaging of messages on male involvement to provide information about what is required of spouses at the health centers.

West Nile Region

- *Promote the involvement of Religious leaders:* Cultural and Religious Leaders must be brought on board and given information to promote attitudinal change with regard to male involvement in reproductive health.
- *Promote male involvement by prioritizing services for men at the Health Centers:* Men should be served first at ANC and released to return to work since experience has shown that men expect instant attention at the Health Centers.
- *Increase resources to manage the influx of expectant mothers from the border regions:* Increase resources such as Test Kits to address the challenge of increasing numbers of Expectant Mothers from neighboring countries at the Health Centers.
- *Promote the multi stakeholder approach to EMTCT:* Promote a Multi stakeholder approach to EMTCT. This was adopted during the Regional Campaign was found to be very effective in reaching the pre – campaign targets that were set.

Busoga Region

- Provide continuous education on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and promote training on morals and life skills for the boy child
- Support the “Egisakate” (training programmes for the youth on issues of culture) organised by the Kyabazinga to instill morals in the young people
- Pass ordinances and by laws to strengthen law enforcement
- Address poverty mindsets and promote family income generating projects
- Promote the education of the girl child

The Mid- Western Region

- Conduct sensitisation to counteract issues of stigma and cultural beliefs that hinder the utilization of HCT and ANC.
- Promote different health packages to attract male attendance at the ANC.
- Improve the supply chain and logistics management
- Promote adolescent friendly health services.
- Promote the economic empowerment of women to address the gender dynamics that impact on their access to reproductive health services.

The Teso Region

- Motivate health workers and ensure community based access to health care.
- Establish Health facilities near the people and ensure improved transportation and infrastructure.
- Provide for health services for men who escort their wives to the ANC.

- Sensitize men to consider pregnancy a family issue. The focus should turn to peer sensitisation.
- Train TBAs so that they refer the mothers to the health services.
- Promote abstinence and faithfulness. Encourage couples to test for HIV.

The Central 1& 2 Region

1. Involve Religious and cultural leaders in all HIV and AIDS campaigns and events.
2. Use the structures in places of worship and religious institutions such as schools to sensitise people on EMTCT
3. Engage religious based health institutions and NGOs to integrate HIV and EMTCT messages in their work.
4. The concept of “Ekisakate” should be used to disseminate information on HIV and AIDS to the younger generation.
5. Involve religious and cultural leaders in the activities of the District Health Teams.
6. Ensure partnerships between Religious and Cultural leaders and the communities at the fishing sites to promote sensitisation.
7. Retention of Mothers in Care by establishing family support groups, economic empowerment and encouraging male participation.
8. Economic empowerment of Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA's) to enable them to supplement their incomes and encouraging them to refer mothers for delivery at health facilities.
9. Promoting Male Involvement in the health care of their spouses and families. It was recommended that emphasis be placed on Mother Baby- Father Points.
10. The “lost to follow up” issue which can be solved if health workers make a concerted effort to reach mothers and their babies who return to homes and communities accessed through the health facility records.

4.0 A Birds eye view of the Regional Campaigns

South Western Region

The South Western Region EMTCT Campaign, was the first in the series of nationwide campaigns. Consequently this was the symbolic national launch of the Option B+ strategy. The Champion administered the appropriate ART tablet to an HIV Positive Couple at the Public Rally and encouraged them to observe adherence

to their treatment. She also used this opportunity to appeal for male involvement in the reproductive health of their spouses, urging them to take up their God given responsibility as heads of families. She called for home grown culturally relevant and appropriate messages. She also appealed to all stakeholders to strengthen strategies on abstinence for young people and being faithful in marriage.

The Consultative Meeting reviewed the progress made on promoting EMTCT and the need for: appropriate messages, strengthened partnerships, and accountability by service providers, accelerated efforts in promoting EMTCT and the strengthening of partnerships in the Response.

The media campaign involving: radio spots, talk shows and print media news supplements, slated prior to the Launch of Option B+ resulted in increased EMTCT service up take in health centers. There was also an increase in programs on HIV and AIDS by the media houses in the Region in the post launch period.

Northern Region

The Campaign provided a platform for the VHTs together with the Cultural and Religious Leaders from the Region, to interface with other actors in the HIV and AIDS Response. They shared about their work in promoting *Abstinence* and *Being Faithful* and strengthened their resolve to provide solutions to Uganda's health challenge.

The Consultative Meeting discussed the challenges and achievements registered by the MOH in the HIV and AIDS response and service delivery for the promotion of male involvement. Additionally, an inspiring message was delivered by the Overseer of the National Fellowship of Born Again Christians Bishop Joshua Lwere, who urged all the stakeholders to emulate the Lord Jesus Christ in sacrificing their time and energies towards the virtual EMTCT.

In line with her role, the First Lady of Uganda and the EMTCT Champion, made a passionate appeal to all the stakeholders to go back to the original strategy of eliminating HIV and AIDS, by adopting behavioral change in line with promoting sexual responsibility; *abstinence* and *being faithful* for the sake of Uganda's children.

Eastern Region

The Campaign presented an effective channel for community mobilization, information sharing and discussion with stakeholders across the spectrum on issues of male involvement in reproductive health.

The Consultative Meeting identified key issues that must be addressed to improve access to health care services by husbands and wives, some of which were: the male ego, gender dynamics, and structural aspects of the health facilities that affect

attendance by men and the availability of commodities. The participants also heard presentations from two youth representatives who read a statement of their commitment towards an *HIV Free Generation*. In the same spirit a Father talked about his involvement in the reproductive health of his family.

The First Lady and Champion EMTCT pointed out that a strong and effective EMTCT program must involve all stakeholders including: parents, communities, implementing partners and the funding agencies. She urged Ugandans to move away from cultural attitudes that tend to leave men out of the reproductive health process and to adopt creative approaches to male involvement.

Karamoja Region

The Campaign provided space for stakeholders at the national and regional level to discuss the status of the HIV response in the Region, with a focus on leadership engagement. The Consultative Meeting acknowledged the need for accelerated advocacy by a broad spectrum of leaders from the community to the district level, with a special emphasis on the Karamajong elders and opinion leaders, who command popular respect in their communities.

The Meeting was graced with the presence of the Executive Director UNAIDS Mr. Michael Sidibe who appreciated the Champion's efforts in promoting EMTCT, expressing optimism that Uganda would meet her Millennium Development Goal on reducing Mother to Child Transmission by 2015.

The EMTCT Champion thanked all the stakeholders for supporting the Campaign which she said was a measure to halt the "runaway rise of HIV infection in Uganda" particularly among the new born babies. She pointed out that male involvement was absent in the Region due to the cultural attitudes that remove men from the reproductive process and yet men control the family resources. She therefore urged the leaders in the Region to reverse this trend by sharing appropriate life saving messages with their communities.

The First Lady crowned the event by presenting *Awards of Recognition* to the Executive Director UNAIDS Mr. Michel Sidibe and the UNAIDS Country Director Mr. Musa Bungudu, for their outstanding work in promoting an HIV Free Generation.

Kampala Region

The Kampala Campaign consisted of several activities including the HIV Public Testing of H.E the President and other national leaders held in November 2013 at Kiswa Health Center IV. The event was organized to promote HIV testing for all Ugandans; this being a first step towards curbing the spread of the Virus and MTCT. In the same

spirit the First Lady took an HIV Test with several dignitaries at the Kololo Airstrip during the Kampala Region EMTCT Campaign Public Rally in March 2014.

A Dialogue on EMTCT for Cultural and Religious Leaders at the National level was held on 14th November 2013. The Leaders discussed their role in the EMTCT and HIV Response and the importance of integrating key messages in their work.

A key highlight of the Kampala Campaign was the Meritorious Award bestowed on the EMTCT Champion by AMMICAL at the March 2014 Consultative Meeting, in recognition of her efforts in the HIV Response. The Meeting among other things focused on: strategies for accessing and enhancing service delivery, private sector partnerships and the importance of engaging health providers in the private sector to support EMTCT.

The EMTCT Champion called upon the Consultative Meeting to address the need to: integrate PMTCT services within the existing Mother and Child health services, improve accessibility to services and provide a comprehensive package of services at Health Centres across the country. She urged the MOH to train health workers to ensure a conducive environment for women and men to utilize health facilities.

West Nile Region

A number of activities were organised as part of the West Nile Regional Campaign. In line with the previous Campaigns a Stakeholder's Consultative Meeting was held at which Stakeholders from the national level and across the Region, discussed the West Nile EMTCT Status Report. This was followed by a Public Rally at the Arua Hill Primary School Grounds.

A unique feature of the Campaign was the organisation of an EMTCT Champion Mother's Pageant that was conducted in all the districts in the Region. Pregnant mothers were engaged in a competition to assess their knowledge regarding EMTCT, Antenatal Care awareness and their ability to share this information.

The EMTCT Champion launched the Motorbike Ambulance Service and the Maternal and Neonatal Health Convergence Programme at the Public Rally Grounds. This Ambulance service is supported by UNFPA to transport expectant mothers to health facilities. In addition the First Lady presented Certificates of Recognition to the Best Performing District and health facility as assessed by Baylor Uganda.

Busoga Region

In the Busoga Region the meetings held with selected interest groups re-laid messages on EMTCT and HIV and AIDS to communities. The Campaign also brought out the significance of involving Cultural and Religious Leaders as a means of addressing

behavioral change; these leaders having done commendable work in mobilising their communities with messages on behavioral change during the pre- campaign activities.

The Consultative Meeting received a report on the findings of the MPs from the Parliamentary Forum on Population and Food Security, who conducted a Campaign against Teenage Pregnancies in the Region. The Report drew attention to the unique challenges the Region faces with regard to: child abuse, poverty, the reckless lifestyles of some of the employees of the Sugar Cane Industry and truck drivers on the transport corridor, all of which fuel the problem of HIV and AIDS. Discussions were held on proposals to address these drivers of Teenage Pregnancies, with emphasis being laid on specific social, economic and law enforcement interventions.

At the Public Rally the people of Busoga listened to a heart rending testimony of a Peer Educator from “Mothers to Mothers” Organisation who talked about how she began her work as a woman confronted by HIV; having to fight stigma and to support other women to do the same. In the same spirit, a young lady born with HIV moved the crowd to tears with her song “*Mothers our Heroes*” in appreciation of Mothers who heed the call on EMTCT.

In her address to the people of Busoga, the EMTCT Champion expressed concern over the high level of teenage pregnancies that affects the lives of young girls exposing them to: HIV, maternal deaths and robbing them of their education, while increasing the rate of maternal mortality in the Region. She urged parents to provide sex education at home and not to abandon this responsibility to teachers. She called upon the Cultural and Religious Leaders to share messages on HIV and AIDS since God will ultimately hold them accountable for the lives of the people under their care and leadership.

Mid- Western Region

The Mid Western Region Campaign re-ignited the resolve of the Religious and Cultural leaders to address the current realities on HIV and AIDS amongst their congregations. The urgency to confront unfaithfulness in marriage and the need for condom use by married couples in such circumstances was also discussed. Furthermore, the factors that hinder couple testing and disclosure were addressed and strategies laid to promote the theme of the Campaign “Test Together, Know Together and Disclose Together”. The Campaign was also characterized by outreach services targeting areas with a known high HIV prevalence and dense population including the: fishing communities, the border areas and the Kyangwali Refugee Camp. Male Circumcision was conducted in these communities for key targeted populations such as: the fisher folk and sex workers.

The stakeholders at the Consultative Meeting were presented with a Status Report on EMTCT in the Region and the progress made in the two month campaign period. The

Report stated that during this period the Region saw a rise in: the number of communities reached with messages on HIV and EMTCT, access to service delivery and the mothers that attended the ANC.

The Meeting also discussed issues hindering the realization of couple testing and identified means to address these hindrances, so as to ensure couples utilize HIV Counseling and Testing (HCT) and that access to health care services by men improves. Some of the proposals made to address these hindrances were: sensitisation to counteract issues of stigma and cultural beliefs that hinder the utilization of HCT and ANC, promoting different health packages to attract male attendance at the ANC, improving the supply chain and logistics management, promoting adolescent friendly health services and promoting the economic empowerment of women to address the gender dynamics that impact on access to reproductive health services.

The Teso Region

In the Teso Region the Campaign drew the public's attention to the urgency there is in sending messages on EMTCT to communities so as to protect the next generation. A concerted effort on awareness creation, HIV Counseling and Testing (HCT) outreach programmes and media campaigns characterized the Region for two months. Service delivery was scaled up enabling a wider coverage of the population. Several media platforms were used for information sharing thus increasing the number of expectant mothers and their families as well as communities reached. The Campaign also provided a platform for awareness creation amongst religious leaders on issues of HIV and AIDS as well as EMTCT.

The Stakeholders Consultative Meeting discussed the issues hindering the realization of retention and the promotion of male involvement in the EMTCT. A number of strategies were proposed to promote male involvement. Additionally the Religious and Cultural Leaders also presented strategies to promote EMTCT amongst their communities. After the Meeting the Minister of State for Primary Health Care Hon. Sarah Opendi commissioned the renovation of Princess Diana Health Center IV; the first renovation in series of refurbishments of Health Center IVs in the Teso Region by Baylor Uganda with support from CDC. The Health Center was also provided with new equipment to support the "Keeping Babies Alive" Programme.

At the Public Rally the Champion heard testimonies "Our Mothers our Heroes", of children born HIV free. Furthermore a husband living with HIV shared his story, stating how he supported his wife to give birth to an HIV negative baby. She applauded this Father and reminded the fathers in every family that they have a duty to their wives and the children they bring into the world. She appealed to men to walk together on the 9 months journey of pregnancy with their wives and to hold hands with them so as to enable them bring forth children who are free of HIV.

She emphasized the fact that it is necessary for people to protect themselves from getting HIV and AIDS in the first place, urging every Ugandan to become a Champion to take the messages to their areas of influence.

The Central 1 & 2 Region

5.0 Conclusion

The nine EMTCT Regional Campaigns witnessed great success in heightening public awareness and building strong partnerships for the promotion of EMTCT across a wide spectrum of stakeholders. The Campaigns were also instrumental in: engaging key stakeholders in consultations around EMTCT and HIV and AIDS, sharing the importance of Option B plus and stepping up the availability of commodities.

Through these Campaigns the First Lady has effectively utilized her political platform to foster increased political will and to enhance an exceptional team spirit amongst stakeholders. In the same vein the public rallies and consultative meetings stepped up the re-engagement of the political, cultural and religious leadership in the HIV and AIDS response.

The effective use of the mass media to disseminate the Campaign messages and the mobilization of the public, has increased the demand for commodities and in turn the accessibility of services countrywide.

OAFLA Uganda owes this success to the tireless efforts of the Uganda AIDS Commission, the Ministry of Health, Government and District officials, implementing partners, the development partners and the communities that have actively participated in the Campaigns country wide.

OAFLA expresses its deep appreciation to all these actors for their tireless efforts. We appeal for continued support as we all commit to:

Stand Out, Participate and Be Counted! – For an HIV Free Generation