



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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PROVIDING NATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR A COORDINATED MULTI-SECTORAL HIV/AIDS/STI/TB RESPONSE



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YouTube

ZAMBIA LAUNCHES DAPIVIRINE VAGINAL RING (DVR) TO EXPAND HIV PREVENTION

For too long, HIV prevention for women has been designed around what is easiest for health systems, not what works for women. The PrEP ring changes that narrative. The National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council (NAC) and the Ministry of Health officially launched the Dapivirine Vaginal Ring (DVR) in April 2026 at the University Teaching Hospital (UTH) in Lusaka as a new HIV prevention option for women and adolescent girls. The DVR is a discreet, long-acting, and woman-initiated form of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) that is worn internally and replaced every 28 days, offering women the ability to independently manage their HIV prevention. Speaking at the launch, the Minister of Health, Dr. Alex Katakwe, indicated that the introduction of the DVR is a strategic intervention that empowers women to take control of their own HIV prevention. Representing NAC Director General, Ms. Violet Mongeza reaffirmed the institution's commitment to ensuring equitable access to the DVR across all districts after the pilot phase.



PRE-TESTING AND VALIDATION OF INFORMATION, EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION (IEC) MATERIALS



Creating HIV messages that are culturally sensitive, relatable, and free from stigma is essential to increasing the acceptance and uptake of HIV prevention services among adolescents and young people. To support this goal, NAC and the Ministry of Health, with support from the University Teaching Hospital HIV and AIDS Programme (UTH-HAP), successfully conducted the pre-testing and validation of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials targeting adolescents and young people. The four-day pre-testing exercise covered Lusaka, Chilanga, Chikankata, and Shiwang'andu districts and focused on key thematic areas including Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), Condom Use, Male Circumcision, Menstrual Hygiene, Abstinence, and Life Skills. Young people appreciated the clear, relatable, and age-appropriate messaging used in brochures, posters, and videos while also recommending improvements to visuals, font sizes, and colour schemes. This was followed by a three-day validation meeting held at the UTH-HAP Echo Boardroom where stakeholders validated the materials, recommending revisions to strengthen accessibility, inclusivity, audio quality, and standardised messaging before final production and national rollout.

ZAMBIA PAN-PSAT COUNTRY WORKSHOP STRENGTHENS HIV PREVENTION RESPONSE

Zambia has taken a bold step in strengthening its national HIV prevention response through an in-country workshop convened in partnership with the South-to-South HIV Prevention Learning Network (SSLN). The workshop brought together national stakeholders and SSLN Country Champions to conduct a comprehensive self-assessment of Zambia's HIV prevention efforts using the Pan-Prevention Self-Assessment Tool (Pan-PSAT), an evidence-based framework that guided participants in evaluating progress across five key areas: *Country Stewardship, Governance and Policy; Tactical Prioritisation; Service Delivery Approaches; Community, Advocacy and Communications; and Sustainable Financing*. The exercise provided a clear and structured reflection of national strengths, identified critical gaps, and generated actionable outputs including an implementation action plan, a learning agenda, and a technical support roadmap aimed at strengthening and accelerating Zambia's HIV prevention response for long-term impact.



MEDIA HOUSES ORIENTED ON DAPIVIRINE VAGINAL RING (DVR) REPORTING



NAC and the Ministry of Health in collaboration with partners including Ascend Futures Foundation (AFF) and Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia (PPAZ), conducted a media orientation training for journalists and media professionals at Radisson Blu Hotel in Lusaka ahead of the official launch of the Dapivirine Vaginal Ring (DVR). The training aimed to strengthen accurate, ethical, and evidence-based reporting on the DVR as a new HIV prevention option for women and adolescent girls. The media received detailed information on the DVR, its benefits, target users, and role in HIV prevention, while addressing myths and misinformation surrounding HIV prevention technologies. They were also encouraged to use factual, balanced, and non-stigmatising reporting approaches to promote public awareness, reduce stigma, and support informed decision-making on HIV prevention services in Zambia.

CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGES IN PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2026 HIV AND AIDS HIGH-LEVEL MEETING

NAC in collaboration with UNAIDS Zambia, hosted a High-Level Meeting on HIV Response at the NAC Boardroom, bringing together civil society organisations, implementing partners, and key stakeholders ahead of the United Nations High-Level Meeting 2026 (#HLM2026). NAC Acting Director of Programmes Ms. Violet Mongeza commended the strong participation from partners and emphasised the need for urgent changes in policy, financing, and service delivery to address persistent HIV vulnerabilities in Zambia. The Global AIDS Strategy 2026–2031 is aimed at accelerating progress towards ending AIDS by 2030. Participants discussed challenges including unmet UNAIDS 10–10–10 targets, rising treatment default rates, and dependence on foreign funding, while reaffirming the importance of community leadership, people-centred programming, and sustainable domestic investment in Zambia's HIV response.



NAC PROMOTES DVR ON BULOZI TV

NAC Communications Manager Ms. Rita Kalamatila was featured on Bulozhi TV in order to strengthen public awareness of HIV prevention in Zambia. The discussion focused on the newly launched DVR, a groundbreaking HIV prevention option designed for girls and women. During the program, viewers received information on the DVR's availability, eligible age group, and effectiveness as an HIV prevention option. Audiences were informed that the DVR is currently under pilot implementation and will be rolled out to the public in due course. The engagement highlighted the DVR as a powerful addition to Zambia's HIV prevention options and reflected NAC's continued commitment to using diverse media platforms to promote accurate, accessible, and women-centered HIV prevention information across the country.



KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT KEY IN HIV AND AIDS RESPONSE



Knowledge Management, Knowledge Translation, and Best Practices are essential in strengthening HIV programming by ensuring that research, information, and lessons learned are effectively captured, shared, and applied to improve health outcomes and service delivery. During the Lusaka Province PACA/DACA review meeting, the Communication and Knowledge Management Unit re-oriented District AIDS Coordination Advisors (DACAs) on the importance of Knowledge Management and Knowledge Translation, including the documentation and sharing of best practices to enhance evidence-based HIV programming and coordination.

PACA/DACA RESPONSE COORDINATION REVIEW MEETINGS

NAC convened Provincial AIDS Coordination Advisors (PACA) and District AIDS Coordination Advisors (DACA) review meetings in Lusaka, Eastern and Copperbelt Provinces. The aim of the meetings was to strengthen coordination of the HIV response at provincial and district levels. The engagement focused on enhancing the capacity of PACAs and DACAs to effectively engage the private and informal sectors in HIV prevention, improving stakeholder mapping to strengthen coordination and collaboration among partners. The meeting further reinforced data management and reporting through the National AIDS Council Management Information System (NACMIS). Condom hotspot management strategies were also discussed to support targeted HIV prevention.



ZAMBIA LAUNCHES GLOBAL FUND GRANT CYCLE 8 FUNDING REQUEST WRITING RETREAT



Zambia commenced the Global Fund Grant Cycle 8 (GC8) funding request writing process. This key national undertaking aimed at securing resources for HIV, Tuberculosis (TB), and Malaria programmes for the 2027–2029 implementation period. The retreat was officially opened in May 2026 by the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) Oversight Chairperson, Ms. Annie Sampa. Under Grant Cycle 8, Zambia was allocated USD315,059,022, with USD 229,074,842 for HIV, USD 18,430,630 for TB, and USD 67,553,550 for malaria. The retreat brought together government, development partners, United Nations agencies, the United States Government, and civil society organizations at the Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka. The emphasis was on integration, prioritisation, efficiency, and innovation to strengthen health systems and support Zambia's goal of ending HIV and AIDS, TB, and malaria as public health threats by 2030.

AHF EXPANDS HIV SUPPORT SERVICES TO EASTERN PROVINCE



NAC supported the launch of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) Project in Eastern Province. The launch was held at Chipata Central Hospital in May, marking an important milestone in strengthening HIV programming and healthcare support services through collaboration between the government and cooperating partners. The event was officially launched by the Permanent Secretary for Eastern Province, represented by the Deputy Permanent Secretary, Dr. Lewis Mwape reaffirmed the government's commitment to working closely with partners in the HIV and AIDS response. He emphasised the importance of equity, equality, and fairness in the delivery of HIV programming and healthcare services so that all communities benefit without discrimination, while also acknowledging AHF's role in supporting prevention, treatment, and care services for vulnerable populations. The launch brought together key stakeholders, including Ministry Health and other government officials.

RAPID LENACAPAVIR (LEN) NEEDS ASSESSMENT

NAC and the Ministry of Health with support from Coalition Health Zambia (CHZ) coordinated a Rapid Lenacapavir (LEN) Needs Assessment in Ndola and Chililabombwe districts from May. The assessment aimed to identify capacity gaps, behavioural barriers, and opportunities for strengthening community-led PrEP demand creation interventions, including emerging HIV prevention options such as injectable PrEP. Using mixed methods across six health facilities, the exercise revealed low community awareness of PrEP, limited knowledge of injectable options (LEN and CAB), inadequate staff training, lack of IEC materials and SOPs, and infrastructure gaps. Key recommendations included strengthening training, improving stakeholder coordination and expanding community education to enhance PrEP uptake and HIV prevention outcomes.



VALIDATION MEETING OF PREP SBC MATERIALS



NAC and the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with Coalition Health Zambia (CHZ), convened a three-day validation meeting at Tiffany's Canyon Lodge in Kafue, Lusaka. This meeting was aimed at validating revised PrEP communication materials following a pretesting exercise conducted in Ndola on the Copperbelt Province. The validated materials included: posters, brochures, and pocket-size PrEP booklets. Having undergone a comprehensive development process, the SBC TWG recommended the materials ready for mass printing and distribution. The materials have since been submitted to the Ministry of Health for the Permanent Secretary's endorsement.

NAC DISCUSS WORKPLACE HIV RESPONSE THROUGH TRIPARTITE COLLABORATION WITH ZFE AND ZCTU

NAC convened a high-level engagement with the Zambia Federation of Employers (ZFE) and the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) in May 2026 to strengthen the Tripartite Collaborative Framework for HIV/AIDS/STI/TB programming in workplaces. The meeting underscored the importance of sustained multi-sectoral partnerships in addressing the evolving HIV response, particularly in the context of shifting global health financing. Speaking during the engagement, NAC Director of Programmes, Ms. Katongo Silwizya, emphasized the urgent need for stronger collaboration between employers and employees to sustain workplace HIV interventions. ZFE Executive Director Mr. Harrington Chibanda highlighted the requirement for employers to integrate health and safety, including HIV programming, within workplace policies to support productivity and employee wellbeing. ZCTU Deputy Director for Gender, Youth & Child Development, Ms. Milimo Kapombe, called for enhanced commitment from both public and private sectors to strengthen workplace HIV responses. The engagement reaffirmed NAC's commitment to strategic partnerships in advancing national HIV/AIDS/STI/TB outcomes.



NAC CONDUCTS INTEGRATED CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ON CONDOM STOCK MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS



NAC and the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Zambia Medicines and Medical Supplies Agency (ZMMSA) conducted an integrated capacity development training on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for condom stock management at Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka. The training brought together Youth Resource Centre (YRC) managers and District HIV/AIDS Coordination Advisors (DACAs) to strengthen condom supply chain systems through improved coordination, reporting, and data management using the National AIDS Council Management Information System (NACMIS). The training focused on harmonising processes for ordering, receiving, and reporting condom stocks. This is in an effort to enhance efficiency, accountability, and collaboration between key stakeholders, ultimately improving condom availability and access at the community level and strengthening HIV prevention efforts across Zambia.

NAC BEGINS PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING INTEGRITY COMMITTEE TO STRENGTHEN INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

NAC welcomed the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) for an engagement to establish NAC's Integrity Committee (IC). This meeting formed part of government efforts under Cabinet Circular CM24 of 2022, which requires all public institutions in Zambia to establish integrity committees to promote transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct. The proposed committee will support NAC in strengthening internal compliance by promoting ethical decision-making, improving adherence to best practices, preventing corruption and misconduct, and enhancing service delivery. NAC reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining a strong, trusted institution as a foundation for an effective HIV, AIDS, STI, and TB response while continuing to uphold the highest standards of integrity in public service delivery.



NAC AND MOH STRENGTHEN CAPACITY THROUGH TRAINER OF TRAINERS (TOT) WORKSHOP ON LENACAPAVIR



NAC and the Ministry of Health, with support from the World Health Organization (WHO) conducted a Trainer of Trainers (ToT) workshop on Lenacapavir (LEN) for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) targeting participants from Senanga, Kaoma, Kalabo, Sesheke, and Mongu districts of Western Province, Zambia. The training focused on Lenacapavir as an injectable HIV prevention option administered every six months and aimed to build technical capacity on clinical eligibility, safe administration, pharmacovigilance, and national implementation guidelines. Participants were also equipped with facilitation skills and standardized training materials to support cascade training at district levels, alongside strengthening competencies in monitoring, reporting, and data use for effective programme implementation. This training reflects Zambia's continued commitment to expanding innovative HIV prevention options and strengthening health system capacity to reduce new HIV infections.

HIV CUREICULUM CASCADE TRAINING: RECLAIMING HIV CURE SCIENCE FOR AFRICA

NAC, with support from CIDRZ, the African Alliance, and the Africa HIV Cure Consortium (AHCC), convened the inaugural Zambian cohort of the HIV CUREiculum Cascade Training at the CIDRZ VenYou Centre in Lusaka. The five-day intensive training brought together technical officers, researchers, and community advocates to strengthen Africa's participation in HIV cure science, a field historically dominated by high-income countries despite Africa bearing over two-thirds of the global HIV burden. The training examined cure science, ethics, clinical trials, and community accountability, highlighting that Africa's limited authorship in cure research reflects structural inequities that must be addressed through deliberate participation and leadership. NAC's involvement reinforced its mandate in coordination, data governance, and community engagement, positioning the institution as a key stakeholder in future cure research readiness and equitable knowledge production in Zambia's HIV response.





NAC provided technical support during a two-day Collaborative Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) Learning Event, which was organised by the University of Zambia (UNZA) in collaboration with UNICEF Zambia. The event brought together health leaders, creative practitioners, community-based organisations, faith groups, and development partners to strengthen the design and implementation of SBC programmes across Zambia. Discussions in the meeting were centered on improving community engagement by ensuring that health interventions are co-created with communities and informed by lived experiences. Key themes included listening to communities, co-designing solutions, and translating grassroots insights into national policy and programming. The event reinforced the importance of people-centered approaches in achieving sustainable behaviour change and improving public health outcomes, particularly in HIV, AIDS, STI, and TB programming in Zambia.

WHAT IF AN HIV CURE IS CLOSER THAN WE THINK? ADVANCING ZAMBIA'S HIV CURE RESEARCH AGENDA

NAC in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, and with support from the Network of Zambian People Living with HIV/AIDS (NZP+) and the Treatment Advocacy and Literacy Campaign (TALC), convened a consultative meeting to initiate the development of Zambia's HIV cure research agenda. The meeting recognised that while antiretroviral therapy (ART) has significantly transformed HIV into a manageable chronic condition, it still requires lifelong adherence, and an HIV cure could substantially reduce the medical, social, and economic burden on people living with HIV. Stakeholders noted encouraging global scientific progress, suggesting that a cure is increasingly plausible and emphasised the need for increased investment in cure research, strengthened community participation, integration of cure science into national HIV strategies, and adherence to ethical research standards. Speaking during the meeting, NZP+ Executive Director Mr. Fred Chungu underscored the importance of sustained dialogue on HIV cure research, while NAC Director of Policy and Planning Dr. Peter Ndemena highlighted the need to assess Zambia's readiness to actively contribute to this emerging scientific field, reaffirming the central role of collaboration, science, and community voices in shaping the future of HIV response.



CCM CONDUCTS STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MEETING ON GLOBAL FUND PROGRAMMES IN EASTERN PROVINCE

The Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) conducted a five-day stakeholder engagement meeting in Chipata, Eastern Province. The meeting was aimed at gathering feedback on the implementation and impact of Global Fund-supported HIV, Tuberculosis (TB), and Malaria interventions. The engagement brought together representatives from women, youths, TB clients, People Living with HIV (PLHIV), Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs), Local NGOs, Underserved Populations (UPs), and the private sector to share experiences, challenges, and recommendations for strengthening health programmes. Stakeholders highlighted issues including stigma, gender inequality, inadequate youth-friendly services, limited community resources, and barriers to healthcare access, while recommending strengthened awareness campaigns, community-led interventions, improved stakeholder coordination, and inclusive service delivery.



NAC through the Directorate of Policy and Planning with support from the Global Fund, conducted the 2026 NACMIS District Data Quality Assessment (DQA) and stakeholder mapping in nine provinces of Zambia to strengthen strategic information, monitoring, and accountability within the national HIV response. Led by Provincial AIDS Coordinating Advisors (PACAs), the exercise aimed at verifying stakeholder records, strengthening reporting systems, and reconciling primary records with the Stakeholder Activity Reporting Form (SARF) and the NACMIS database. 168 stakeholder organisations were mapped and verified, with 97 percent actively reporting into NACMIS. The assessment further strengthened data-entry capacity among district stakeholders while improving reporting compliance towards achieving 100 percent SARF submission.



NAC SHOWCASES HIV PREVENTION AND CARE SERVICES AT AFRICA PUBLIC SERVICE DAY COMMEMORATION

it is always said that prevention is better than cure. National that is well informed will make right decisions thereby averting potential HIV infections. During the 2026 Africa Public Service Day Commemoration, NAC showcased HIV prevention information, IEC materials, strategic documents, and HIV prevention models while providing HIV testing and counseling services in collaboration with AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), CIDRZ, and UNZA Clinic. During the exhibition, NAC and partners tested a total of 270 clients for HIV, with four clients testing HIV positive and immediately linked to care and treatment services, including one pregnant mother initiated on full ART at UNZA Clinic. Additionally, 171 clients were tested for syphilis with one reactive case identified, and nine clients were referred for injectable PrEP services, 5,244 male condoms and 200 HIV Self-Testing Kits were distributed, alongside 80 NAC Resource Centre brochures and other IEC materials.

