

THE OLD FORT DECLARATION ON HIV/AIDS
African Broadcast Media Leaders' Summit
Johannesburg, October 3-5, 2005

We, the leaders of Africa's broadcast media, inspired by the spirit of the Old Fort that represents the victory of the against apartheid, acknowledge that the HIV/AIDS epidemic sweeping our continent and neighbouring island states is a threat to humankind and an urgent impediment to the future prospects and wellbeing of all our nations, undermining our efforts to build social capital and strong economic systems in our countries. However, it is also an opportunity to reaffirm our common humanity and to strengthen our bonds with one another.

Convinced that broadcast media have a critical role to play in the fight against HIV/AIDS and that African broadcasters can make a very important contribution to HIV/AIDS information dissemination, awareness, behaviour change, prevention, care and support in our countries, we therefore make the following commitments:

- 1) To redouble our efforts to combat HIV/AIDS by ensuring that our organisations at all levels understand HIV/AIDS as a developmental, national and corporate priority, see the importance of HIV/AIDS within the context of our public broadcast mandates, business strategies and budgets, set clear goals and targets, and lead by example through the implementation in our organisations of appropriate HIV/AIDS work place policies and programmes.
- 2) To use our executive authority within our organisations to make HIV/AIDS an integral part of our strategic business plans and in so doing to prioritise the integration of HIV/AIDS-related messaging and information across radio, television and all new media platforms, and all programme genres.
- 3) To engage our governments on the strategic alignment of HIV/AIDS communication with our national plans to combat HIV/AIDS, and develop a complementary communications plan for HIV/AIDS with targets, time frames and budgets.

- 4) To adopt a people-centred approach to HIV/AIDS communication and information, with understanding and in partnership with the audiences we are targeting.
- 5) To prioritise effective communication and programming that targets children, youth, women, orphans and other vulnerable groups who are at great risk for HIV/AIDS.
- 6) To devote substantial and increased radio and television broadcast airtime in both peak and shoulder periods and utilise new media for all HIV/AIDS-related communication and programming including public service announcements.
- 7) To produce programmes that reduce stigma, and focus on gender relations, high-risk sexual behaviour and the link between poverty and HIV/AIDS .
- 8) To work with partners¹ in our own countries and in our regions to enhance our capacity and resources to produce research-driven programming and evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of our efforts so that we improve our contribution to combating HIV/AIDS.

To give effect to the above and, recognising that funding and capacity will be required to achieve these commitments, we further commit to an ongoing collaborative partnership with our fellow African broadcasters – to be known as the African Broadcast Media Partnership Against HIV/AIDS in collaboration with existing pan-African and regional broadcast organisations – with the following objectives:

- (i) Increased and sustained communication, education and information-sharing with regard to HIV/AIDS programming.
- (ii) Develop editorial policies and quality assurance guidelines on HIV/AIDS-programming.
- (iii) Take proactive steps to secure self-funding for local HIV/AIDS programming on radio and television.

¹ Non-governmental organisations, government, private sector organisations, universities, multi-lateral and bilateral funding agencies and private foundations.

- (iv) Collaborate with one another and with global partners to advocate for and establish a funding and resource-sharing mechanism for regional projects and co-productions that are transparent, accountable and have clear goals.
- (v) Establish more systematic and sustained interchange among television and radio programme producers, and with independent producers, to devise creative programme content, develop innovative approaches to promoting HIV/AIDS messaging and information across genres, and seek resonance with local cultural, traditional and religious practices wherever we can.
- (vi) More routine sharing of HIV/AIDS-relevant broadcast programme material, and synchronised schedules, programme exchange and easier access to HIV/AIDS-relevant rights-free broadcast materials.
- (vii) Create opportunities for co-production and multi-country production of HIV/AIDS-relevant materials.
- (viii) Provide technical and infrastructural support to enhance in-country HIV/AIDS-relevant production capacity, broadcast connectivity and mechanisms for extending audience reach.
- (ix) Take pro-active steps (for research, technical assistance, seed funding and HIV/AIDS programming expertise) to enhance in-country television and radio HIV/AIDS programming production skills and the empowerment of talent.
- (x) Ongoing research-based monitoring and evaluation of our HIV/AIDS programming with the purpose of continuously enhancing the impact on relevant audiences.

Lastly we, African broadcast leaders gathered at the Old Fort, Johannesburg, on this 5th day of October 2005, commit to holding ourselves and our organisations accountable for the pledges contained herein and for that purpose to meet again at the executive level in no more than 12 months from the date of this Declaration.