



REMARKS BY

PROFESSOR LILLIAN TIBATEMWA-EKIRIKUBINZA, FIRST
DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR (ACADEMIC AFFAIRS), MAKERERE
UNIVERSITY, ON THE OCCASION OF
LAUNCHING THE SAFE MALE CIRCUMCISION (SMC) SERVICES
AT THE MAKERERE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

ON

TUESDAY 11TH DECEMBER 2012

STARTING 3:30PM

- Your Excellency Ambassador Scott DeLisi, The U.S. Ambassador to Uganda
- The Minister of Health Hon. Dr. Christine Ondo
- The Chairman Uganda AIDS Commission Prof. Vinand Nantulya
- The Director General Uganda AIDS Commission Dr. Kihumuro Apuuli
- CDC-Uganda Country Director, Dr. Wuhib Tadesse
- Makerere University Joint AIDS Programme (MJAP) Executive Director Dr. Jennifer Namusobya Isabirye
- Principal Investigator of the SMC Project, Prof. Nelson Sewankambo
- The Director University Health Services, Dr. Jane Bosa
- Colleagues from Makerere University
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

.....

It gives me great pleasure to once again welcome you to the official launch of the Safe Male Circumcision (SMC) services; one of the four components of the HIV combination prevention interventions offered by the Makerere University Hospital and Makerere University Joint AIDS Programme (MJAP) partnership,

In a special way, I would like to welcome Ambassador Scott DeLisi to Makerere University, and to commend you for choosing to make your maiden visit this memorable. We thank the American Government and People who through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) have continued to support Makerere University through MJAP. This generous support has also been extended through the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in terms of technical support rendered to MJAP.

Ladies and Gentlemen, His Excellency has since taking up office in July, demonstrated his passion to make a difference in the community he lives. His recent participation in the Generation Change Uganda Chapter Launch on 1st November and the Uganda Mentoring Walk on 17th November not to mention today's official launch is greatly appreciated. Indeed, this can only be a taste of greater participation in events to come, and the continuation of our cordial working relationship with the Government and People of the United States of America.

Through the aforementioned support, Makerere University Hospital has embraced combination prevention that involves a multi-pronged approach to HIV prevention. The Hospital had in the past been offering Condoms, HIV

Counseling and Testing (HCT), and advocating for Abstinence and faithfulness through a number of peer programs and groups.

However, the hospital could not undertake SMC due to the logistical challenges that come with it in terms of staffing, equipment and efforts for demand creation. Nonetheless, thanks to the partnership with MJAP, this challenge was overcome in the last quarter of 2011. To date, the hospital has offered comprehensive HIV prevention services to over 15,000 Males and some members of their families, with more than 10,000 males volunteering for SMC.

Working through a social marketing model, where the circumcised shared their experience and referred their colleagues to the university hospital, the numbers grew from just a handful in the first days of implementation to over 60 surgical operations a day. Within a very short while, members from the surrounding community that surprisingly included even Boda Boda riders, bar attendants, saloon and boutique owners started trekking to the facility.

The demand and response was so overwhelming that the makeshift tent had to be transformed into a semi-permanent structure; as seen during the earlier tour, where a good number of adults and youths waiting for the service are given health education and other tips on healthy living.

The program has also trained and built 15 high performance circumcision teams that are able to circumcise over 20 clients per day per team. These teams have spread out all over the country, a feat that has transformed the hospital into a reference centre of excellence for SMC.

We would therefore like to thank the U.S. Government, which through the various programmes and agencies has supported MJAP activities since 2004. And thanks to MJAP's partnership with the University Hospital, Makerere University has through SMC achieved one of her main objectives, that is. to reach out to and remain relevant to the communities we exist to serve. I thank you all for according me your attention, as we build for the future.

Professor Lillian Tibatemwa-Ekirikubinza, First Deputy Vice Chancellor