

# NATIONAL AIDS COUNCIL



## QUATERLY NEWSLETTER

### Finalization of the MAT guidelines and SOPs



The National AIDS Council in partnership with Ministry of Health, Civil society with support from Ciheb Zambia convened a four – day meeting to finalize the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Guidelines and Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs). This meeting was aimed at identifying gaps in the Kabwe drafts, obtain approval from stakeholders present, develop roadmap for establishment of MAT clinics, update the draft guidelines and SOPs in order to align them according to the Ministry of Health standards. In attendance were line Ministries, selected statutory bodies under the Ministry of Health, UN family and CSO implementing Harm reduction intervention.

### Consolidation of the Harm reduction pretesting Report

The Drug Enforcement commission, National AIDS Council, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Civil Society with support from the CDC through CIDRZ convened a consolidation meeting. The meeting was aimed at consolidating pretested social behavioral change (SBC) materials for people who inject drugs, collect feedback to enhance the content, format and design materials to ensure that the materials were relatable, informative and impactful to the target audience. The pretesting report consolidation exercise utilized a comparative analysis approach to include views that were common in all reports from different districts and views that may not have been necessarily common but were useful in the final development of information Education and communication (IEC) materials.



*Participants of the PWID Subcommittee meeting*



## Pretesting of the harm reduction



*Ndola pretest*



*Livingstone pretesting*

The rising prevalence of substance use among People Who Inject Drugs (PWIDs) poses significant public health challenges in Zambia. To address these challenges and improve community messaging, the Drug Enforcement commission, National HIV/AIDS/TB/STIs Council, and Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Sanity House supported by CDC through CIDRZ, have developed targeted Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials. The pretesting exercise was conducted in four different districts namely Livingstone, Lusaka, Kabwe and Ndola. The exercise involved 48 PWIDS clients, divided into four groups of 12 participants each. The pre-testing exercise demonstrated that the IEC materials are relevant and relatable to PWIDs, with minor adjustments required to enhance their effectiveness.

## The GIZ donation of the solar power system

The Germany government, through GIZ development cooperation donated a solar back up system to the National AIDS council on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025. The solar system includes a 12 KVA inventor, 12 solar panels and three 5.12 KW lithium batteries generating about 15KW of power. At the time of the handover, the system was producing about 9KW, while the demand load stood at 7KW. Speaking during the donation, NAC Director General Dr. Kebby Musokotwane said, "The donation is a stride towards sustainability through the use of green energy and serves as a testament to our enduring partnership." At the same meeting the National AIDS Council also signed another agreement of the Phase 2 Strengthening Girls project which focuses on interventions that target adolescent girls and young women.



*signing of the agreement of the Phase 2 Strengthening Girls project*



*NAC DG and GIZ Country Director cutting the ribbon as a symbolic way of officially handing over the Solar equipment.*



## Empowering communities: JIC runs mark women's and youth day commemorations in Chirundu.



As part of the Women's and Youth Day commemorations, Chirundu District conducted Join-In Circuit (JIC) Run activities across three key wards—Chirundu Central, Chirundu West, and Ngombe Illede. These dynamic and interactive sessions aimed to raise awareness on critical issues affecting the district, including gender-based violence (GBV), teenage pregnancy, early marriages, and HIV/AIDS. A total of 77 adolescents and young people participated in the activities, including 42 females, underscoring the community's commitment to building a more informed and empowered youth population.

## Pre-testing of HIV Prevention and MNCH Messages

In order to ensure that materials developed are in tandem with the target audience, the Ministry of Health in collaboration with National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council (NAC) supported the pre-testing of 37 audio messages developed by USAID Zambia Integrated Health (ZIH) to be used on the 667 platform. The Pre-test exercise was conducted from 20 to 24 January 2025 in six health facilities in Ndola on the Copperbelt Province. The facilities included 2 urban, 2 periurban and 2 rural (urban -New Masala and New Mushili, peri urban -Mapalo and Nkwazi and rural - Kaniki RHC and Dola Hill RHP). A total of 12 focus groups (FGDs) were conducted in the six healthy facilities with two at each health facility consisting of adolescents/Young people and a group of adults.



## National Women's Day Commemoration



The National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council (NAC) joined other government institutions, Civil society, and the private sector to commemorate the International Women's Day on 8 March, 2025 under the theme "For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment." The provincial commemoration was held at the Lusaka Show Grounds main arena and was officiated by her Honour, the Vice President WK Mutale Nalumango. In her keynote speech, the Vice President stated that the 2025 women's day theme underscored Zambia's dedication to ensuring that no woman or girl was left behind in national development agenda.

Mrs Nalumango added that the theme also highlighted the immense resilience, invaluable contribution and unstoppable potential women across all sectors had showcased while acknowledging the systematic barriers that must be addressed in the pursuit of the gender equality. Additionally, she also stated that empowering women and girls remains a key priority.

### NAC Convenes PrEP Technical Working Group to review 2024 Implementation

The National AIDS Council (NAC) convened the PrEP Technical Working Group (TWG) to review the status of PrEP implementation and set strategic priorities for 2025. The meeting brought together stakeholders from government, civil society, and development partners to evaluate progress, identify bottlenecks, and align on actions to scale up access. Discussions focused on improving uptake in the midst of the USA funding freeze, integrating PrEP into routine health services, and addressing barriers such as stigma and limited awareness. The TWG committed to strengthening service delivery models and community outreach, with NAC reaffirming its leadership role in coordinating a robust, multisectoral PrEP response.

### Condom Programming in Focus: NAC's Technical Working Group Assesses 2024 Progress

The Condom Technical Working Group, under the leadership of NAC, convened to evaluate the implementation of condom programming in 2024. The TWG acknowledged notable successes, including improved distribution channels, increased condom availability, and enhanced coordination among stakeholders. However, challenges remain, particularly in reaching young people, promoting consistent condom use, and addressing cultural and social barriers. To strengthen the program, the group proposed intensifying demand generation campaigns, expanding partnerships with community organizations, and improving data systems for tracking distribution and uptake. NAC emphasized the centrality of condoms in HIV prevention and pledged continued support to overcome implementation gaps.

## Civil Society Constituencies Elect Representatives and Executive



In a demonstration of inclusive governance and community engagement, civil society constituencies successfully conducted elections through the NAC-supported self-mechanism process. The elections allowed diverse groups including key populations, youth, women, and people living with HIV to democratically select their representatives. A new executive committee was also elected to coordinate civil society inputs into national HIV and health policy dialogues. NAC commended the transparent and participatory nature of the process, reaffirming its commitment to ensuring civil society remains a strong and active partner in the national response. The elected representatives pledged to champion accountability, inclusivity, and rights-based approaches in all engagements.



## Quarter one in pictures

