

Swedish AIDS Ambassador Lennarth Hjelmåker visits Lusaka – Why does Sweden have an Ambassador for HIV and AIDS?

Because fighting HIV and AIDS is a politically prioritised issue for Sweden. It is important for us to work actively on all levels, nationally, regionally and globally. It is also absolutely crucial that the fight against HIV and AIDS doesn't become a separate issue but rather an integrated aspect in all other policies. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida, work very closely on these issues, but it is also important to have someone responsible for keeping the network together. Work has to be coordinated in order for our measures to be the right ones and for us to push for them in the right ways and in the right fora.

What is your role?

I am a lobbyist and an activist as well as a coordinator. My role is to make sure that we keep discussing the content of Swedish support to the fight against HIV and AIDS as well as how the implementation of the policies is carried out in the most effective and coordinated way possible. Always stressing the connection to sexual and reproductive health and rights is crucial, for example. I travel a lot in order to meet key persons in the field and make use of their experiences and advice.

What are the most important measures that need to be taken in order to reach the target of halving the number of new HIV infections by 2015 in Southern Africa?

Prevention needs to be seen as a very broad-based issue, with many complex dimensions. We need to always keep in mind that HIV and AIDS is much more than a medical issue, even much more than a health issue. It is a matter of Human Rights. We need to fight stigma, discrimination and see the effects of HIV and AIDS for long term development. We need to dare speak about sexuality, sexual violence, prostitution and drug use. Not forgetting about special needs of young



people. We need to have open eyes and open minds.

It is also a matter of realising the magnitude of the disease. Some think there is no danger anymore, but we need to remember that the number of new HIV infections continue to increase.

A lot is happening when it comes to global policy development at the moment with new interesting research being presented. The Swedish Policy for international HIV and AIDS efforts titled "The Right to a Future" from 2008 is an important input to this.

What are the most important obstacles to reaching this target?

Fear to speak about sensitive issues and power structures in our societies. We need to see the whole picture, for example the actual reasons behind women selling sex. Women and girls need to have greater options and more influence over their own lives.

What are your expectations on the regional Focal Point Meeting this week?

Sweden keeps a very high profile in HIV and AIDS issues and contributes to setting the global agenda for the fight against this disease. The big challenge is practical

implementation. We should not only report on issues, we need to be actors and therefore it is important to get down to discussions on how we work on country level. It is also important for leaders from various organisations to come together and share experiences. We need to remember that all leaders, also our own Ambassadors, are important for the fight against HIV and AIDS. Leadership is vital in order for us to be able to raise issues such as sexuality and reproductive rights in our political dialogue with various countries, for example.

He was appointed AIDS-Ambassador in 2003 and reports to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Ambassador Hjelmåker was previously a member of the UNAIDS board as well as chairman of the Global Fund policy committee.

5th Swedish Norwegian Focal Point Meeting “Universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, and care for Africa- How can we make it happen?” coverage

Norway values a unique occasion

The Minister Counsellor from the Embassy of Norway, Lusaka, Tori Hoven explained that the Focal Point



Tori Hoven

seminar provided a good opportunity for representatives from other embassies throughout the region to discuss a problem that is at all levels and improve their knowledge base and

capacity for dialogue on key issues on HIV and AIDS at national and regional level. She also outlined that Norway welcomed the decision that was made to extend The Team’s mandate by including a greater focus on vulnerable groups; integrate issues related to SRHR; and a gender perspective. She Said “Women’s empowerment and gender equality is one of the key priorities of Norwegian development cooperation, and one of the main focus areas of the Norwegian Embassy in Lusaka.” Ms. Hoven said, she could not understate the link between gender and HIV and AIDS in the collaborated efforts.

Sweden-Norway joint efforts recognised

– The Swedish Ambassador, Marie Andersson de Frutos, officially opened the meeting. She outlined Sweden’s contributions to the HIV and AIDS response and gave the priority areas for the Policy for Sweden’s International HIV and AIDS Efforts which are; HIV prevention; alleviation of the

long-term effects of HIV and AIDS; strengthened respect for human rights, and increased efforts for gender equality. She also explained that in order to be strategically position at regional and

“This year’s meeting of merging the focal points, regional and reference group provided a unique opportunity for all parties to draw variety of knowledge and experiences.”

bilateral efforts Norway joined forces with Sweden hence the Swedish Norwegian Regional HIV and AIDS Team for Africa. “A centre of excellence which we all should make use of,” she said, “I am proud to be the Ambassador and to Head such an important and proficient team.”

She appreciated that through the Team, Sweden and Norway were supporting projects through Regional Organisations as well supporting all Swedish and Norwegian embassies in Sub Saharan Africa to carry through their important work.

She expressed her hoped for more informed dialogue on HIV prevention with the different African



Marie Andersson de Frutos

governments especially the need for an enabling policy environment for vulnerable audiences such as LGBT; Injecting drug users

(IDUs), Migrant population, Prisoners, women, young persons, and people with disabilities.

Reinforce women & girl focus in agenda -

The UN Secretary General’s Envoy for HIV and AIDS in Africa, Elizabeth Mataka, who is also a Reference Group member gave the keynote address for the meeting. In a speech read for her by Ms. Njelesani, Mrs. Mataka reminded the meeting of the commitments the world leaders had made in 2001 and 2006 and talked of the progress made so far.

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explained that while there had been limited progress towards meeting the Universal Access targets, generally, there were still opportunities for more effective

programing. Mrs. Mataka also spoke of the need to integrate SRH, gender based violence and culture with HIV. She reiterated the need to focus on moving the agenda for women and girls in a concrete and measurable manner.

Knowing Your Epidemic -

UNAIDS RST ESA Malayah Harper, Senior adviser, presented an update on the HIV and AIDS epidemiological situation in Southern and East Africa. It highlighted the risk factors and drivers of the epidemic and the need to invest in Know Your Epidemic (KYE) studies to respond effectively to the threat of HIV. She informed the meeting that out of the 33 million people living with HIV globally, 22.4 million are in sub-Saharan Africa, accounting for 67% of the epidemic burden; that the eight countries with prevalence higher than 12% are all in southern Africa. Ms. Harper said that there were limitations with prevalence data, therefore the need for more country specific analyses and focus on the number of new infections and/or incidence – KYE

studies. Ms Harper said, “Heterosexual sex was the major mode of adult transmission in this region, followed by mother-to child transmission.” She said, TB still was the leading

killer of People living with HIV (PLHIV). The meeting was reminded that the region



was still off track in reaching the Millennium Development Goal on child and maternal health. That in 2008 out of the 4.9 million people needing ART, 2.4 million were accessing it. Though there was evidence of some behaviour change in the sub-Saharan region. She added that, there was need to move beyond treating the symptoms and public health and biomedical interventions to addressing broader risk factors and drivers through accepted strategies.

AIDS fight not for financial gain -

The Swedish HIV and AIDS Ambassador, Lennarth Hjelmåker said combating the pandemic should not attract competition that is based on financial gains. Mr. Hjelmåker said that the competition should be based on how best the spread of HIV and AIDS could be stopped or at least minimised. He also urged poor countries to generate their own resources to supplement what the international community puts in the efforts to prevent further spread of HIV, and for care and treatment.

“There is no disease that has attracted so much discrimination and stigma like HIV and AIDS. It is, therefore, important that we tackle HIV and AIDS from the prevention point of view because the disease is a complex one, and yet there is too much competition for the money,” he said.

He said while in Sweden, HIV infections were not as high as in many African nations,

Sweden decided to put HIV and AIDS high on its agenda.

While HIV and AIDS was a medical ailment like any other disease like malaria, it was different because of its complex nature.

“We need a broader approach that is all-inclusive of the Church leaders, political leaders, the youth, faith-based organisations (FBOs), and many others. Only then can we deal with this complex issue,” said.

“There is need to talk about issues like sexual equality, sexuality orientations, sex workers (men and women), etc. Talking openly about these issues will certainly help and everybody must be involved.”

Issues of HIV and AIDS should not be simplified by saying AIDS is only a medical problem and yet it was

a complex issue that desires working together



Lennarth Hjelmsaker

among bilateral, multinationals, civil society, and Zambia

He said his role as Swedish ambassador on HIV and AIDS was to promote dialogue with

people, Government leaders, civil society, business community, youths and schools on how best “we can work together.” *courtesy of Times of Zambia*

The Swedish Norwegian Regional HIV/AIDS Team for Africa in Lusaka, hosted the 5th annual focal point meeting for Swedish and Norwegian Embassies in the region on HIV and AIDS under the theme “**Universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, and care for Africa- How can we make it happen?**” This was in recognition to the weight and importance Sweden and Norway lay in actively combating HIV and AIDS in Africa. The objective of the meeting was to improve the participants’ capacity for dialogue on key issues on the HIV/AIDS agenda.

The meeting brought together governments, development partners, civil society organizations to discuss on the progress made in reaching targets for universal access; including prominent names like Prof. Alan Whiteside, (Director of HEARD), Elizabeth Mataka (UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS), Malayah Harper (Senior adviser, UNAIDS RST ESA), Prof. Emeritus Michael Kelly, Sweden’s AIDS-Ambassador Lennarth Hjelmsaker and Noerine Kaleeba (founder of The AIDS Support Organisation, TASO).

Universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support is about achieving equity. This is a groundbreaking global movement that is saving millions of lives. However progress has been uneven, through this meeting participants took stock of what’s working and what is not and how to link future national, regional and global responses in HIV and AIDS. This is an opportunity to analyse existing approaches to HIV prevention, identifying gaps and priorities.

Farewell & and best wishes to.....



Charlotta Norrby joined the embassy in August 2006; she returns to Sida HQ. Her last official day at the embassy is 13 August 2010. She is being replaced by Per Lundell (he starts in early 2011) – Welcome!



Kristina Ramstedt joined the embassy in 2007; she retires straight away. Her last official day at the embassy is 10th June 2010. She is being replaced by Dag Sundelin – Welcome!



Peter Iveroth joined the Team at embassy in March 2007; he goes to start work as Head of Infection Control Unit (Smittskyddsläkare) in his home county Jönköpings Län. His last official day at the embassy is 6 August 2010. He is being replaced by Cristina de Carvalho – Welcome!



Michael Tawanda joined The Team at the embassy in August 2006, Seconded from Norwegian embassy, Lusaka. He goes back to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo. His last official day at the embassy is 30 July 2010. There will be no replacement (by Norwegian diplomat)



Karin Fallman joined the embassy in October 2008; she goes back to Sida HQ. Her last official day at the embassy is 14 August 2010. She is not being replaced.



Henrik Riby joined the embassy in August 2006 and will return to Sida HQ. His last official day is 16th June. His replacement is not known yet; but Ana-Karin Municio, based at HQ will take up all his programmes/projects until January 2011 – Welcome!

Cajsa Werner joined the embassy in September 2008; she returns to Stockholm Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Her last day at the embassy is August 31 2010. Her replacement is not yet known.



Congrats to.....

Mercy Mutenga's 20years of service and Kingston Sichila's 18 years of service. They received medals of long service from the King of Sweden.



Congrats to..... Karolina and Jason on the arrival of your baby girl!!!!!!

NEWSLETTER FROM THE SWEDISH NORWEGIAN REGIONAL HIV/AIDS TEAM FOR AFRICA
 FOR MORE INFORMATION
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 The Team is a joint programme of the governments of Sweden and Norway; covering sub-Saharan Africa from the Embassy of Sweden in Lusaka, Zambia.