



OUR HEALTH OUR FUTURE

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▲ Sheila Tlou, Former Minister of Health Botswana, Co-chair of the Global HIV Prevention Coalition and member of the High-Level Coordination Group on the ESA Commitment

“A WATERSHED MOMENT, BUT LET’S NOT LOSE MOMENTUM!”

“We all know that access to information is the bedrock of effective HIV prevention. Last week it gave me great pride to see African leaders re-confirm their support for the new Eastern and Southern African Ministerial Commitment. It’s encouraging to see countries recognise the need to systematically scale-up sexuality education and youth-

friendly SRH services across the region and acknowledge the ongoing and devastating impact that COVID-19 is having on the lives of young people. Building on the promises we made eight years ago, the new Commitment outlines an ambitious agenda, which puts adolescents’ sexual health, mental health and well-being at the centre. Yet, we know that business as usual will not be enough. Continued leadership on these complex - often taboo - issues is critical if we want to ensure a bright future for ALL young people, leaving no one behind. The hard work starts now!”

 @_dinotshe

“SPEAK OUT, ACT UP!”



▲ Martha Clara Nakato, SRHR Alliance Uganda

The sexual and reproductive health commitments Ministers have made at ICASA 2021 will affect millions of young people across East and Southern Africa. With so much at stake, we must speak up NOW, to ensure our leaders deliver the lifesaving promises they have made!

 @marclara180



Read **Taking a stand for sexual health – and our future – Frontline AIDS : Frontline AIDS** by Martha Clara Nakato

THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS...



The new ESA Commitment expires in December 2030. In simple terms, this means we have 107 months to influence and deliver the changes promised. Several important milestones are on the horizon in early 2022, including:

- Country endorsement (ongoing)
- Publication of ESA Commitment
- Finalisation the Regional Accountability Framework (which will be shared with civil society for input)
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) workshops with core ministries in the 21 countries
- A revamp of regional and country level task teams

GROWING GRASS-ROOTS SUPPORT FOR CSE AND ADOLESCENT SRHR

Advocates across the region joined forces at national meetings to engage ministries of Education, Gender, Health and Youth. The meetings provided an open platform for civil society and governments to discuss the **Our Health Our Future Call to Action** which has now been endorsed by more than 270 organisations across East and Southern Africa and proposes a strong set of recommendations to advance action on CSE and SRHR. The meetings also played a vital role in sensitising communities to rally support for the Commitment and helped to build consensus on the role of CSOs in delivering and monitoring its implementation.

Additionally, advocates participated in inter-ministerial meetings and technical working groups to help shape the language of the new Commitment, drawing on recommendations from the Call to Action. Despite vocal opposition in some countries, meetings gained media attention with supportive coverage in **Rwanda**.



“Young people, religious leaders, civil society, UN agencies and government departments came together to discuss how we can deliver on this shared agenda. In Uganda, the Chairperson of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on ESA from the Ministry of Education praised the work of CSOs and pledged to continue to support CSO engagement in the implementation of the new commitment, and new reporting mechanisms. The Commissioner for Children and Youth Affairs at the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development also provided a welcome update on the progress made by the ministry in finalizing the Sexuality Education Framework for out-of-school youth, which will be critical in helping us to achieve these new targets”

James Byarugaba, Executive Director, Youth Alive Uganda



▲ Mr. Fred Ngabirano, The Commissioner for Children and Youth Affairs at the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development Uganda (above right) joins national meetings to discuss the Commitment

COUNTERING OPPOSITION: WHAT WORKS?

Efforts to improve or expand young people's access to comprehensive sexuality education and SRHR services are increasingly being met with vocal, well-funded and well-coordinated opposition.

Over the past few months we've seen conservative "pro-family" advocacy groups - with ties to the US - targeting decision-makers with misinformation. Knowledge is power. We are creating an online space where advocates can share information and ideas, or simply support one another. We want to know...

- How are opposition groups mobilising your country or local district?
- What tactics are you using to counter these smear campaigns?
- How successful have you been?
- Are there any resources/tools you can share?

Contact: cmorrison@frontlineaids.org

CSE AND SRHR IN THE NEWS!

- ➔ Read **Sexuality Education is not new or foreign to African culture** by Dr. Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, the African Union Goodwill Ambassador on ending child marriage
- ➔ Read **Seven myths about sex education debunked** by Tom Jalio in African Arguments
- ➔ Read **Activists worked to end pregnant schoolgirl ban. They succeeded**, Aljazeera

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- Population Council [@Pop_Council](https://twitter.com/Pop_Council)



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Get the latest developments on the Commitment, share information and connect with other advocates in the Our Health Our Future community of practice. **Register now!**