



29 August 2009

**Re: letter of support for the Launch of Brothers for Life Campaign**

For a very long time issues of Sexual and reproductive health has been focused on women through family planning , antenatal clinics and majority of people who have access to health and take up health services has been women. This has put a rise in the burden of care for women. Sexual and Reproductive health for men has been a grey area until very few male clinics opened.

It take a man and a woman to plan pregnancy, man and woman to have sex, man and woman to reproduce, therefore intervention should focus on both not one or the other. The consultation on male circumcision has made us start this conversation and this initiative puts it on practice. Lets start talking man and women's sexual and reproductive health

The SANAC Women's Sector hereby would like to show its support for the Brother for Life Campaign. It is important that men actively take up the battle in curbing the rate of new HIV infections firstly understanding their own bodies, having safe sex, treating STIs, test for HIV, planning pregnancy, getting involved and supporting their partner through pregnancy and be responsible parents.

The women's sector also realize that working with men as partners is very important work in changing gender norms that perpetuate the spreads of AIDS and also further involvement of men in broader sexual and reproductive health. Understanding issues of sexuality and sexual health for men and reproductive health rights for both men and women is key. The women's sector has started good working relations with the men's sector and will continue to do so in every initiative that seek to address gender inequalities.

We hope that the campaign will also challenge the heteronormative framework in which many existing initiatives targeting men take place, and that it extend to all men and boys regardless of sexual preference and further that advocacy and educational campaigns clearly reflect this.

We recognize that one of the greatest challenges that exist in fighting the HIV pandemic remains the unequal relations between men and women, where women are continuously denied access to resources, the victims of femicide, rape and aggressive sexual assaults ringing in our ears.

As the Women's Sector we encourage and support progressive initiatives that work toward correcting the gender imbalances, and educating men and boys in their respective roles and responsibilities not only in broader society but foremost to women as their mothers, partners, sisters and comrades in this struggle against HIV/AIDS.

Nomfundo Eland [SANAC Women Sector Chair]