

RIGHTS vs REALITY: HIV & AIDS



Fifty-one out of fifty-four African countries have signed a ground-breaking legal framework known as the Maputo Protocol; forty-one have ratified it. The Maputo Protocol is a powerful instrument enshrining women's and girls' rights. Fifteen years after the Protocol was conceived, progress has been made, yet many women and girls are still deprived of their fundamental human rights.

i WHAT ARE HIV & AIDS?

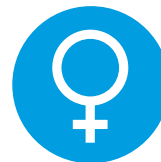
The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) targets the immune system, thereby weakening the body's defense against infections and some forms of cancer.



It can lead to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) if not treated. AIDS is a set of severe symptoms that can be fatal.



There is no cure for HIV, but antiretroviral therapy has proved effective in controlling the virus and preventing transmission.



HIV and AIDS affect women and girls disproportionately across Africa.

? WHAT RIGHTS ARE GUARANTEED BY THE MAPUTO PROTOCOL?

According to the Maputo Protocol, every woman has the right to:

PROTECT

herself and be protected against sexually transmitted infections, including HIV



KNOW

her own health status and that of her partner

Her government has the responsibility to:

PROVIDE

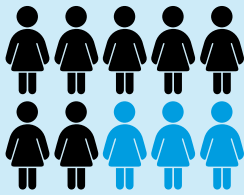
adequate, affordable, and accessible health services



INFORM AND EDUCATE

all women and girls on sexual health, especially those in rural areas

WHAT IS THE REALITY?



7 IN 10

young women in sub-Saharan Africa do not have comprehensive knowledge about HIV



3 OUT OF 10

countries lack legislation that guarantees non-discrimination on the basis of HIV

Young women aged 15-24 in sub-Saharan Africa are

2.5 TIMES

more likely to be infected with HIV than men of the same age group

AIDS-related illnesses are the **SECOND LEADING** cause of death for women in Africa aged 15-24

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

All countries who committed to the Maputo Protocol must:

- **Adopt** and implement specific laws on HIV that respect and promote the right to non-discrimination on the basis of HIV, guarantee and ensure voluntary testing and counselling on HIV, and address the particular concerns and human rights of marginalised and vulnerable groups of women and girls.
- **Reform** laws that criminalise HIV related (sexual) conduct, in particular those which criminalise same-sex sexual acts.
- **Improve** access to sexual and reproductive health services and information, and ensure full free and informed consent regarding these services.
- **Remove** restrictions on HIV testing and counselling, such as those relating to age, marital status, third-party consent requirements.
- **Train** health service providers and counsellors in a gender-responsive approach that respects non-discrimination, confidentiality, and informed consent in the provision of integrated SRH services, including HIV and mother-to-child transmission services.
- **Allocate** sufficient and adequate resources to provide comprehensive and quality HIV and AIDS services integrated with sexual and reproductive health services and primary health care.

The #RightByHer Campaign works across Africa to reduce the gap between rights and reality. At #RightByHer, we analyse the status of inequality, raise awareness, facilitate empowerment and together advocate for change.

This factsheet is based on the State of African Women Report. Full report and more info at rightbyher.org Oct. 2018

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