



The Republic of Uganda

UGANDA AIDS COMMISSION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

CONCEPT NOTE

THE 3rd NATIONAL HIV AND AIDS SYMPOSIUM 2024 FEATURING THE ANNUAL JOINT AIDS REVIEW, NATIONAL HIV AND AIDS SCIENTIFIC MEETING, PARTNERSHIP FORUM AND PHILLY LUTAYA MEMORIAL

November 13, 2024

Theme: "Accelerating Interventions to End AIDS by 2030"



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1. Introduction/Background

1 Status of the HIV and AIDS Epidemic in Uganda

The National HIV prevalence in Uganda currently stands at 5.1% among adults aged 15 to 49 years (JAR 2022/2023). There are disparities, however, in the burden of HIV by demographic group and geographic area. For example, HIV prevalence is higher among women (6.5%) compared to men (3.6%) (JAR 2022/2023). HIV prevalence is disproportionately high among sex workers (31%), persons living in fishing villages (23%), prisoners (15%), and men who have sex with men (12%) (Modes of Transmission Study, 2022). Geographically, the top 10 local governments with the highest HIV prevalence include the following: Fort Portal City (17.8%), Mbarara District (14.4%), Soroti City (13.3%), Kyotera District (13.2%), Kalangala District (12.8%), Lira City (12.1%), Masaka District (11.2%), Kabarole District (10.6%) (District Estimates, UAC, 2023)

2 Challenges to the national HIV and AIDS response

Despite substantial progress in combating HIV and AIDS in Uganda, major challenges to the response remain and include: a high number of new HIV infections making it difficult to achieve epidemic control, sub-optimal retention in care among persons on antiretroviral therapy, death among persons with HIV despite the availability of antiretroviral therapy, challenges in data systems and reporting, sustainable financing for the HIV and AIDS response, and limited investment in potential enablers of program success.

2.1.1 New HIV infections

In the latest Joint AIDS Review Report, new HIV infections remain high at 51,516 (JAR 2022/2023). Never-married females (35%), previously married uncircumcised men (20%), previously married females (12%), and female sex workers (11%) contribute the largest proportion to the number of new infections (MOT, 2022).

2.1.2 Retention on antiretroviral therapy

Most persons with HIV are on antiretroviral therapy (ART), and the majority are

adherent and suppressed. In the JAR 2022/2023 report, the country's report on the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets for adults 15+ years was 91% for the proportion of persons with HIV who know their status, 94% for the proportion of those testing positive who are on ART, and 94% for those on ART who are suppressed. However, children 0-14 years are lagging on the first and third 95s (72-98-84). Also, children 0-14 years and adolescents 15-19 years are lagging on linkage to care: 86% and 85%, respectively, initiate ART within 1 month of an HIV diagnosis compared to 95% for adults 15+ years. Despite the large numbers initiating antiretroviral therapy, retention on ART remains low (77% for adults and 73% for adolescents at 1 year).

2.1.3 AIDS-related death despite availability of antiretroviral therapy

AIDS-related deaths remain unacceptably high at 17,466 (JAR 2022/2023). These rates have stagnated at the same level for the last 4 years suggesting challenges in the implementation of the care and treatment program or the insufficiency of available interventions to prevent AIDS-related death.

2.1.4 Data systems

Data systems for HIV and AIDS have been improved. However, the systems are not well harmonized. There is a need for a higher-level system that aggregates the data from disparate systems (e.g., HMIS, EMIS, OVCMIS). Systems to collect and manage data on social, behavioral, and structural interventions are also underdeveloped. This is especially true for interventions that occur at the community level. Data on key populations are also scanty. For example, it is unclear how many are linked to ART within 1 month of an HIV diagnosis, and there is scant data on retention at 1 year among key populations, which may be related to high mobility among the groups.

2.1.5 Sustainable financing and investment in enablers of program success

With the reduction in donor support for the HIV and AIDS response, the need for a sustainable national response is urgent. There is a need for increased investment in potential enablers of program success such as training, mentorship, institution building,

and integration of services. The need for strengthening leadership and coordination structures is also urgent. UAC has initiated the implementation of the National HIV and AIDS Research Agenda, but there is limited investment in domestic funding for research, training of researchers, and structures to effectively coordinate the research agenda.

3 Background to the National HIV and AIDS Symposium

The Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC) developed the National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (NSP) 2020/2021 – 2024/25 aligned to the third National Development Plan (NDP III) and the SDGs. The NSP provides the overall strategic direction guidance for the national response. The NSP was developed under 4 broad thematic areas which include; (i) prevention, (ii) care and treatment, (iii) social support and protection, and (iv) systems strengthening. To operationalize the NSP, UAC and partners developed a National Priority Action Plan (NPAP) that articulates the key activities to be implemented by stakeholders for each strategic action. The NPAP spells out output results, time frame for implementation, and lead line sectors in the implementation of the strategic actions. The M&E plan for the NSP lays out a framework for tracking and evaluating the interventions.

The National HIV and AIDS Symposium (NHAS) is a key activity under the National Strategic Plan (NSP) for HIV and AIDS. The M&E plan for the NSP lays out a framework for tracking and evaluating interventions for HIV and AIDS in the country. The Joint AIDS Review (JAR), a core activity of NHAS, provides the platform for this evaluation. The Annual National HIV and AIDS Scientific Meeting, also a core activity of NHAS, provides a platform for programmers and scientists to share the latest findings from the implementation of the research agenda, and to share findings from operational research in the HIV response. The scientific meeting is also a platform for dialogue on programming challenges and to build the capacity of programmers and junior scientists in response to conducting HIV and AIDS research.

NHAS occurs in an open setting to encourage community participation. This is in line with the goals of the Philly Lutaaya Commemoration, also a core event at the symposium. The Philly Lutaaya events encourage openness about HIV and AIDS and encourage support for persons with HIV and AIDS. The Partnership Forum occurring every 2 years, will this year be an important platform for strengthening the HIV and AIDS Partnership Mechanism. SCES inclusive of the Local government participants will especially be targeted at the symposium and should be part of discussions on program undertakings from the previous year and from the current year. NHAS is an important platform for partners to showcase their work in the HIV and AIDS response through the exhibition. The exhibition provides visibility to UAC and our partners.

4 Lessons from the Last Symposium (NHAS 2023)

NHAS 2023 occurred in the open-air setting of Millenium Park, Lugogo, and Kampala. Core events included the Scientific Meeting, the JAR presentation, the Philly Lutaya Commemoration, the Financing Dialogue, and the Exhibition.

4.1.1 What went well at NHAS 2023

4.1.1.1 Attendance and Participation

The meeting was attended by many participants. The Minister for the Presidency, the Honorable Milly Babalanda, was the chief guest at the opening ceremony. US Ambassador, HE. William Pop, also graced the opening ceremony. There was substantial community involvement. Despite bad weather and soggy grounds, participants were resilient and maintained active participation for 3 days. The total number of registered participants was 1,800. Philly Lutaaya events were especially well attended, with substantial participation from students and young people. Former Minister for Trade and Industry, the Honorable Amelia Kyambadde delivered the keynote address on the legacy of the Late Philly Bongole Lutaaya. The Honourable Naome Kabashariira, MP Rushenyi County, was the chief guest at a well-attended and high-energy closing ceremony.

4.1.1.2 Sound and Display Systems

The public address systems and other technology elements including screens and information display facilities functioned well throughout the symposium.

4.1.1.3 Abstract Content Scientific Content

We had an intense abstract-driven scientific program. Overall, we reviewed up to 185 abstracts and approved 34 for oral presentation and 139 for poster presentation. Many high-quality posters were subsequently displayed and viewed by participants throughout the 3 days of the symposium, especially on the last day. Breakout sessions were largely successful and had many high-quality oral presentations and excellent leadership from session chairs.

4.1.1.4 Organization and Coordination

UAC organized the symposium in partnership with an event manager. The event manager was responsive to complaints and did well to manage the short preparation time, and emergencies arising out of last-minute venue cancellation and subsequent bad weather. The provision of meals on Day 2 and Day 3 was helpful and may have improved participant retention on Day 2 and Day 3. Timekeeping was also better than at previous meetings.

4.1.2 Challenges at NHAS 2023

Some people were joining in on Zoom, but there was no dedicated staff making sure that their interests were catered for, that their presence was acknowledged, and that they could ask questions during sessions and receive answers.

4.1.3 Scientific and programming issues emerging from NHAS 2023

The need to improve services for prisoners and other incarcerated populations was highlighted in the scientific sessions as was the need for supporting and strengthening the role of lay support staff in the HIV program especially at high-volume facilities. The lack of a repository for local scientific products was also highlighted. Other key issues that emerged were: mortality among patients on ART, the need to appreciate the

social aspects of HIV care, and punitive laws limiting access to services for vulnerable groups. Nutrition and food security, the need to scale up capacity building, training, and mentorship, and the need to strengthen the role of districts in the HIV response were also highlighted.

4.1.4 Innovations for NHAS 2024

4.1.4.1 General approach

NHAS 2024 will once again feature the JAR presentation, the Scientific Meeting, the Philly Lutaaya Memorial Lecture, and the Partnership Forum. The Financing Dialogue, previously a core event at NHAS, will this year be organized as a one-day pre-symposium event.

4.1.4.2 Pre-events

The Financing Dialogue will be a key pre-event, a day before the symposium. It will be a half-day event featuring plenary presentations and a panel discussion. The format of the panel discussion will change from speakers giving speeches on a podium. Instead, speakers sit on a panel, answer some questions from the moderator, and then take questions (predominantly) from the audience. Other key pre-symposium events for 2024 will include regional events that will integrate scientific presentations, exhibitions, entertainment, communication and advocacy, presentations from cultural leaders, and presentations from traditional healers.

4.1.4.3 Plenary sessions

For 2024, we will include all presentations in the plenary. We will examine the scientific program of last year to identify studies that we would like to follow up on for this year. The authors of these studies will be invited to present papers in plenary sessions. Regional partners will also be invited to present papers arising out of regional scientific meetings. We will also identify and invite keynote speakers to make presentations on important topics. The scientific program will aim to cover all major thematic areas of the NSP. We will push for more integration of the Philly Lutaaya program into the

overall scientific program. Some of the entertainment and testimonies will go into the plenary and target everyone, while some of the technical presentations, especially in the areas of social support and community systems will go to the Philly Lutaaya Tent.

4.1.4.4 Regional Scientific Meetings

In preparation for the national scientific meeting in October, we will hold thematic regional scientific meetings focusing on specific programming challenges in different regions. Due to limited resources, regional meetings will leverage previously planned regional events/meetings.

Regional meetings will therefore occur as follows: Hoima (Bunyoro region – May 2024 – we will leverage the regional PFTI engagement pre-Candle Light Memorial and focus on large infrastructure construction projects, systems for HIV and AIDS prevention, care and treatment, and other issues specific to the region); Soroti (targeting Teso – May 2024 – we will leverage the regional media engagement for that region and focus on AYP programming and school retention for HIV prevention); Mbale (Targeting Bukedi and Bugisu/Elgon regions – July/August – we focus on key populations programming, role of social and behavioural sciences); Lira (targeting Lango and Acholi – July 2024 – we will leverage the regional PSAT meeting for the region and focus on AYP programming and the impact of the war on HIV prevention, care, treatment, and systems); Mbarara (Targeting Ankole region – June 2024 – we will leverage regional media engagements and focus on the care and treatment program and mortality among PLWH on ART); Fortportal (Targeting Toro – June 2024 – we will leverage regional media engagements and focus on AYP and school retention).

Regional meetings will target participation from universities in the region, members of research academia and professional associations self-coordinating entity (RASP-SCE), the local governments, cultural leaders, and traditional healers. The first regional scientific meeting will occur in May on the sidelines of the Candle Light Memorial (e.g., a day before CLM) in the region where CLM occurs this year. The regional meetings will integrate scientific sessions, communication, and advocacy. We will encourage

participation from cultural leaders and traditional healers. UAC will identify a specific partner in each region to collaborate with when organizing the regional meeting (e.g., in Hoima, the meeting will be hosted by Baylor, the regional PEPFAR implementing partner).

4.1.4.5 The Partnership Forum

The partnership forum occurs every 2 years and will occur this year. Partners, especially from the National leaders, membership of SCEs, and local governments will be involved in discussions on the last day of the symposium and will be invited to adopt the aide memoir from the symposium and review and approve undertakings from the past year and the current agreed undertakings.

4.1.4.6 Participation of SCEs and local governments

We will encourage more involvement of the Self-coordinating entities in organizing and implementing NHAS activities, especially members of the youth constituency. We will expect participants from the Uganda National Young Positives Association, Uganda National Students Association, Students Associations from different Universities, and the National Youth Council.

In NHAS 2024, we will target more participation of the organizing committees in symposium activities. Currently, many partners participate in planning meetings but tend to come in as participants at the symposium and not as organizers. We will push for organizing partners to take on more coordination roles including technology management, time management, and protocol, among others.

4.1.4.7 Linkage with World AIDS Day

NHAS 2024 will build into World AIDS Day (WAD) 2024. Collaborations with SCEs established for NHAS 2024 will be leveraged to promote the active participation of SCEs in WAD 2024. New data and information from NHAS 2024 will be shared on WAD 2024. Also, pre-events for NHAS 2024 e.g., regional meetings, media campaigns, publicity events, and regional concerts, will be leveraged to build into WAD 2024.

4.1.4.8 Capacity building for junior scientists

For NHAS 2023, we provided technical support to junior scientists, who submitted abstracts that we judged as presenting a good idea despite being poorly written. For up to 15 scientists, we provided online technical support to improve the writing of their abstracts, and on-phone technical support to improve their presentations and posters. For NHAS 2024, we will conduct more capacity-building activities and we will be more deliberate. We will issue a specific call for submissions from junior scientists intending to participate in the program. We will then organize at least one physical meeting as a pre-symposium event bringing together junior scientists in HIV and AIDS and taking them through sessions on scientific writing. We will also provide online and on-phone support for scientists participating in the program. The Junior Scientists Program at NHAS is important to the proposed HIV and AIDS Young Leaders Fellowship at UAC; it is a potential platform for identifying appropriate candidates for the UAC fellowship.

5 Objectives of NHAS 2024

The general objectives of NHAS 2024 include the following:

1. To hold the National HIV and AIDS Scientific Meeting 2024 to showcase innovations in the HIV and AIDS response in Uganda based on the thematic areas
2. To convene stakeholders in the national HIV and AIDS response to discuss the Annual Joint AIDS Review report
3. To hold the Philly Lutaaya Commemoration to rally the country against HIV and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination
4. To convene the Partnership Forum involving partners in all sectors to validate the JAR undertakings

6 Rationale

The National HIV and AIDS Symposium 2024, will feature the National HIV and AIDS Scientific Meeting, the Annual Joint AIDS Review, the Philly Lutaaya Memorial Lecture, Financing Dialogue, programming and science exhibitions, and the Partnership forum.

7 Rationale for the National HIV and AIDS Scientific Meeting 2024

The National HIV and AIDS Scientific Meeting for 2024 will bring together programmers, scientists, and all partners in the UAC partnership mechanism to share and discuss their work, challenges, and innovations to improve outcomes for the HIV program in Uganda. The meeting is an opportunity for scientific partners in the HIV response to present their work, get feedback from peers, and come up with a common strategy to address emerging challenges.

In 2019, the Uganda AIDS Commission worked with partners to develop the National HIV and AIDS Research Agenda 2020-2024. The objectives of the research agenda are: to articulate HIV and AIDS research priorities; to serve as a national framework to guide HIV and AIDS research; to facilitate the coordination of HIV and AIDS research among stakeholders; and to serve as a tool for resource mobilization and allocation. Thematic areas in the research agenda were based on the NSP and include prevention, care and treatment, social support and protection, systems strengthening, and monitoring and evaluation. The National HIV and AIDS Scientific Meetings will solicit abstracts under each thematic area.

The Scientific Meeting for 2024 will provide a platform for discussions on different priorities for ending AIDS as a public health threat including cure research, new HIV infections, improvements in the care and treatment program, building systems for sustainability, reducing HIV and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination, and improving communication of HIV and AIDS information to the public. The scientific meeting is also an important platform for building the capacity of Ugandan scientists to conduct and communicate HIV and AIDS research.

8 Rationale for The Joint AIDS Review and Partnership Forum

Uganda AIDS Commission annually conducts the Joint AIDS Reviews (JAR) to review the implementation of the National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (NSP). This is in a bid to review progress against set targets and to fulfill the UAC mandate of Strategic Information management including reporting. The 2024 JAR/ Global AIDS Response Progress Reporting marks the 4th year of implementation of the 2020/21 – 2024/25 of the NSP. It also comes during the 8th year of reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). There are 17 SDGs and SDG 3 (“Good health and well-being” and ‘By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases, and other communicable diseases’ respectively).

Therefore 3 reviews and the Mid-term Review of the NSP have been conducted. This review allows the country to assess the state of National response and progress in achieving HIV-set targets during the 4th year of the NSP. Furthermore, the review will contribute to a better understanding of the global response to the HIV pandemic, including progress toward the global targets set in the 2011 Political Declaration of ending the AIDS pandemic by 2030 and the SDGs. Member countries of the United Nations are mandated to produce Country Progress Reports annually to inform the Global AIDS Progress Report. Additionally, UAC is also mandated to conduct Annual Reviews and report to the Office of the Prime Minister therefore fulfilling both National and International reporting obligations.

The Presidential Fast Track initiative to end AIDS by 2030 was launched by H.E. the President in 2017. The initiative outlines a Five Point Plan to reduce AIDS as a Public Health threat. The review also allows checking on the progress of the PFTI. The Annual reviews offer an opportunity to recast and sharpen the national responses to AIDS and to scale up interventions in those areas where a difference can be made in reaching the new NSP targets including those for 2030.

9 Rationale for Philly Lutaaya Memorial Commemoration (Philly Bongole Lutaaya (19 October 1951 – 15 December 1989))

The NHAS 2024 will feature the Philly Lutaaya Memorial Lecture where a keynote speaker will be invited to give the lecture. Other Philly Lutaaya Memorial activities, e.g., testimonies and edutainment, will be integrated into the symposium program. There will be regional events such as engagements with youth leaders, engagement with cultural institutions, music concerts, and quizzes, among others. Music concerts will feature renditions of Philly Lutaaya's popular "Alone and Frightened" song. The goal of these activities is to awaken the communities to the HIV and AIDS epidemic and to fight Stigma within the communities. UAC will partner with a popular radio station in each region to innovatively engage communities to listen to the messages on HIV and AIDS. For example, during a radio program where different singers present their renditions of the Philly Lutaaya song, the public will be encouraged to call in and vote for the best singer.

PHILLY BONGOLE LUTAAYA (RIP) was a Ugandan legendary singer, who pioneered efforts to give HIV and AIDS a human face amidst stigma, discrimination, denial, and ignorance. As a Sweden-based Ugandan musician, Lutaaya was the first prominent Ugandan to publically declare that he had an HIV infection. His declaration created awareness and mitigated myths and misconceptions surrounding HIV/AIDS. He used music to educate the population about the epidemic and articulated the strategies for prevention which evolved into the Abstinence, Being Faithful, and Use of Condoms (ABC) model that impacted many lives. Every year, the Uganda AIDS Commission mobilizes stakeholders countrywide to commemorate the **PHILLY LUTAAYA** day on 17th October. The day presents a forum to mobilize the entire population to reflect and evaluate the commitments to end HIV/AIDS. The **PHILLY LUTAAYA** day is a local advocacy opportunity to remind communities of the collective effort to end AIDS-related stigma and consequently end AIDS. Before dying of AIDS, Lutaaya spent his remaining time writing songs about his battle with AIDS, releasing his last album 'Alone and Frightened', including his famous song "Alone"-which is

synonymous with HIV messages, as well as touring churches and schools throughout Uganda to spread messages on HIV prevention.

Philly Lutaaya's advocacy work was a catalyst to Uganda's HIV/AIDS success story and his campaign is believed to have contributed greatly to the reductions in HIV prevalence that subsequently occurred from 18% at that time to 5.2% by 2022. He is acknowledged as the father of "Positive Living" a notion that drives the international principle of greater and meaningful involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS in interventions against HIV.

The PHILLY LUTAAYA commemoration contributes to the most needed opportunities to reach the communities with facts on HIV strategies, conduct dialogues among the communities across the country, disseminate international and national achievements, share notable research findings and awareness of access to care and treatment, social support and HIV prevention. The event offers a forum to showcase national interventions and provide HIV and health services to the communities through exhibitions by AIDS service organizations and partners.

The event further stimulates and empowers individuals to access HIV messages, information counseling and testing, sexual reproductive health, and referrals to the HIV continuum of care. It also serves to reengage leaders to make pronouncements and commitments towards policy development and implementation, resource mobilization, and actions targeting improved HIV/AIDS responses.

People living with HIV like Philly Lutaaya have been part of the HIV/AIDS response from the very beginning of the epidemic, often becoming engaged before national governments. Traditional roles such as advocacy, activism, serving as government watchdog, and acting as community caretaker—have been critical to the response. These efforts have contributed greatly in reducing new HIV infections; Reducing AIDS-related mortality and increasing funding for the response.

10 METHODOLOGY

The National HIV and AIDS Symposium 2024 will feature The National HIV and AIDS Scientific Meeting, The Annual Joint AIDS Review, The Philly Lutaaya Commemoration, The Financing Dialogue, Program and Science Exhibitions, and The Partnership Forum. This is an event for all stakeholders at national and lower levels that attracts political/policy and technical representation to share information on the status of the epidemic and response and agree on national priorities for action.

11 Methodology for the National HIV and AIDS Scientific Meeting 2024

12 NHAS 2024 Committees

Headed by the HIV Prevention Officer, 5 Topical issues will be identified from the thematic areas of the NSP. Papers will be solicited from the experts in the response which will be presented in the plenary at the NHAS meeting on 13th November, 2024. These are aimed at stimulating discussion and key issues picked to contribute to the undertakings

12.1.1 The Multi-Sectoral National Organizing Committee

This Committee will be headed by the Director General and will, for the government, draw membership from UAC, Public Universities, and government affiliated Research Institutions (IDI, JCRC, UNHRO, UVRI, Makerere School of Public Health, and Rakai Health Sciences Program), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Gender, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry for the Presidency. For civil society, the committee will draw membership from UNASO and other civil society partners including the human rights and KP populations groups. For the private sector, the committee will draw members from the media, telecom, banking, and other sectors. The Committee will provide overall leadership for the meeting and harmonize the activities of different players in the UAC partnership mechanism. The Multi-Sectoral National Organizing Committee will be responsible for organizing and coordinating the activities of the Phily Lutaya Memorial Lecture.

The Multi-Sectoral Committee will establish sub-committees to take care of specific activities. There will be 5 sub-committees: 1) Scientific and Programs, 3) JAR, 2) Philly Lutaaya Commemoration, 4) Resource Mobilization, 5) Communication Exhibition and ICT. Sub-committees will report to both the Multi-Sectoral Committee and to the UAC Core Committee.

12.1.2 Scientific and Programs Committee

This sub-committee will be chaired by a member of RASP, co-chaired by DPRP, and will draw membership from UAC and external partners (see attachments for details). The committee will manage the scientific program. The committee will evaluate last year's program and identify studies that we need to follow up on. Partners who made those presentations will be invited to present updates on their work. The Committee will also solicit for and manage oral presentations from keynote speakers.

12.1.3 The JAR report compilation process

Technical Assistance will be procured comprising of a maximum of 2 consultants, and these will be responsible to study the various documents and synthesize a report based on the NSP 2020/21 – 2024/25. This report will provide progress by the 4th year of the NSP, and formatted according to the indicators (impact, outcome, and some output). The report must demonstrate trends from 2020 to 2024 as an initial step to ease progress reporting for the upcoming final year of the current NSP. The report will be about 40 – 50 pages covering all the thematic areas including the progress of implementation of the JAR 2022 undertakings.

A three-day residential retreat will be convened to review the report by the writing team. This team will be drawn from the multi-sectoral response including UAC, MoH, MoGLSD, MoES, Civil Society, and ADPs among others. The report from the writing retreat will then be presented to the respective thematic TWGs for validation and any other input. The report will undergo the approval processes before printing and presented at the NHAS 2024.

12.1.4 The Philly Lutaaya Commemoration Sub-Committee

The Philly Lutaaya sub-committee will be chaired by the Director Partnership. The Committee will organize pre-NHAS Philly Lutaaya Commemoration activities, and NHAS activities including the Philly Lutaaya Memorial Lecture. The committee will also organize testimonies, regional engagements with partners, edutainment, and community activities at the symposium.

12.1.5 Resource Mobilization Sub-Committee

This committee will be headed by the DPSI and will draw membership from UAC, the Ministry of Finance, other government bodies, civil society, and the private sector (see attachments for details). Head of Resource Mobilization will coordinate and convene the committee. The committee will be responsible for mobilizing resources, drawing up the budget, and planning and organizing the exhibitions. The exhibitions will be one way to mobilize resources for the symposium, partners will be contacted early, even as the rest of the organizing is still going on.

12.1.6 Communication Exhibitions and ICT Sub-Committee

This sub-committee will be chaired by the Head of Communication and Advocacy and will draw membership from UAC (communication and other departments) and external stakeholders including the Youth Constituency. The committee will assist the symposium with technology issues including Internet, manage the exhibitions, and do publicity work.

12.1.7 The Event Management Sub-Committee

There will be an event management sub-committee chaired by DFA. Other members of the committee will include DPSI, DHRA, DPRP, DP, Head Resource Mobilization, Head Procurement, Head Communication and Advocacy, Head ICT, HPO, Coordinator Private Sector, Head M & E, PA Finance and Accounting. This committee will develop terms of reference for the event management firm, hire the firm, and work closely with the firm to ensure the success of the event.

12.1.8 The NHAS 2024 Secretariat and Rapporteurs

There will be a secretariat at the NHAS 2024 headed by The Chair of the UAC Core Committee (DPSI). The Chairperson of the Secretariat will command the Symposium and will have 3 deputies (Head M& E, HPO, and Coordinator Public Sector). The Chairperson will continuously manage the program, and whenever otherwise occupied, e.g., making presentations or attending other meetings, the deputies will take over as appropriate. The Secretariat will hire and manage MCs for the event, ensure that activities start and end on time, and ensure that there are neither protocol violations nor interruptions to technical presentations. The secretariat will hire and manage rapporteurs to capture proceedings and make reports. The secretariat will also manage protocol, entertainment, participant registration, etc, and will appoint different officers from UAC, the Youth Constituency, and other Partners to perform different duties as appropriate. For food and refreshments, UAC will budget for food, tea, and water and refreshments for all meeting participants throughout the 3 days of the symposium. This is based on lessons learned from the last symposium, where it emerged that providing meals, tea, and refreshments encourages participation and commitment to the activities of the symposium.

13 Venue for the Symposium

The symposium will be convened at the office of the President Auditorium on the 13th of November, preceding the HIV and AIDS financing dialogue on the 12th at Quality Chemicals in Luzira.

14 Priority topics for presentations by thematic area at the National Meeting

HIV Epidemiology, HIV Prevention	Basic Science, HIV Care, HIV Treatment
✓ Safer sexual behavior and reduction in high-risk behaviors among key populations, priority population groups, and the general population	✓ Treatment options
✓ Mitigation of socio-structural, cultural,	✓ Comorbidities, coinfections, general health, nutrition, mental health
	✓ Integration of HIV care and treatment

gender, and other drivers of HIV/AIDS	with other health services
<p>Social Support and Protection, Human Rights, Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Describing HIV-related stigma, stigma reduction interventions ✓ Interventions to reduce vulnerability to HIV and AIDS ✓ Gender-based violence and discrimination ✓ Child protection and reducing violence against children ✓ Equity and social inclusion 	<p>Systems Strengthening, HIV and AIDS Financing, Monitoring and Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Effectiveness of national leadership and coordination frameworks ✓ Community systems ✓ Information sharing and data utilization

Regional meetings

There will be several regional meetings mostly leveraging pre-planned UAC events/meetings as follows:

#	City	Regions targeted	Focus	Date	Targeted partners
1	Hoima	Bunyoro	HIV and AIDS interventions for communities in and around large infrastructure projects, refugees, and other mobile populations	May 16, 2024	UAC, Baylor - leverage Candle Light Memorial Pre-events
2	Soroti	Teso	AYP programming and school retention for HIV prevention	May 29, 2024	UAC, Soroti University, Media - leveraging regional media

					engagements
3	Mbarara	Ankole	HIV and AIDS care and treatment program and mortality among PLWH on ART	June 4, 2024	UAC, MUST, Media - leveraging regional media engagements
4	Fort Portal	Toro	AYP programming and school retention for HIV prevention	June 6, 2024	UAC, Mountains of the Moon University, Media - leveraging regional media engagements
5	Mbale	Bugisu, Bukedi	The importance of the social and behavioral sciences in the HIV program and programs for key populations	July/August 2024	UAC, Busitema University, Islamic University Mbale - leverage research agenda
6	Lira	Lango	Impact of the War on HIV and AIDS in the region and programs for adolescents and young people (AYP)	June/July 2024	UAC, Lira University - Leverage regional PSAT meeting
7	Gulu	Acholi	Impact of the War on HIV and AIDS in the region and Programs for adolescents and Young People (AYP)	August 2024	UAC, Gulu University - leverage regional PSAT meeting

15 Joint AIDS Review General Methodology

The Country Progress Report 2023/24 will be prepared through a consultative and participatory process in 2 phases; by conducting a comprehensive desk review,

convening a series of pre-conference meetings including GAM validation, and SCEs to assess their performance based on the indicators in the NSP and UNAIDS guidelines/GAM indicators including undertakings for JAR 2022. The JAR report will be presented at the Annual HIV and AIDS Scientific Conference, and the undertakings compiled.

16 Key questions to be answered by the JAR 2024

- What game changers are required in the National HIV response at all levels to accelerate progress towards attaining the 95-95-95 targets by 2025 and ending AIDS by 2030?
- What commitments can key HIV constituencies make towards accelerating progress towards HIV prevention and treatment targets?
- What are the priorities for the planned 2025/26 – 2029/30 NSP?

17 Validation of data for the GAM tool

This is an ongoing activity that started in December with the convening of a series of Estimates and Projections TWG meetings. This is aimed at reviewing the program data for consensus. Data collection for the NCPI is also ongoing. A validation meeting has been planned to bring together all the key players from multi-sectoral responses. The purpose of this meeting is to validate the data to be entered into the online GAM tool for submission to UNAIDS.

18 Compilation of the JAR report

Building on last year's approach of compiling the JAR report, an editorial team will be constituted to generate the JAR report to have the report printed before convening NHAS.

19 Proposed approach to JAR report compilation

The response boosts very recent data and documentation including;

- The GAM report comprises many indicators which have the most recent data
- The Mid-Term Review of the NSP 2020/21-2024/25
- The UDHS, 2022
- The JAR report, 2023
- The Annual Health Sector Performance Report, 2023

- The Stigma and Discrimination Report, 2023
- The HIV and AIDS estimates
- The Modes of Transmission study
- Key Population Estimates report
- Resource Mobilization Strategy
- The HIV Mainstreaming guidelines
- The national AIDS spending Assessment among others.

Technical Assistance will be procured comprising of a maximum of 2 consultants, and these will be responsible to study the various documents and synthesize a report based on the NSP 2020/21 – 2024/25. This report will provide progress by the 4th year of the NSP, and formatted according to the indicators (impact, outcome, and some output). The report must demonstrate trends from 2020 to 2024 as an initial step to ease progress reporting for the upcoming final year of the current NSP. The report will be about 40 – 50 pages covering all the thematic areas including the progress of implementation of the JAR 2022 undertakings.

A three-day residential retreat will be convened to review the report by the writing team. This team will be drawn from the multi-sectoral response including UAC, MoH, MoGLSD, MoES, Civil Society, and ADPs among others. The report from the writing retreat will then be presented to the respective thematic TWGs for validation and any other input. The report will undergo the approval processes before printing and presented at the NHAS 2024.

20 The JAR Editorial Team

A multi-sectoral team will be constituted for the JAR by thematic areas; Each team has a UAC staff who is a team leader to ensure that the respective thematic area in the report is comprehensively reviewed and data gaps are filled. The members will be facilitated according to GOU guidelines.

21 SCE and TWG Meetings

These will target Self-Coordinating Entities and Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to allow for regular reporting and performance monitoring by UAC. These will

build up on the quarterly Review meetings during which each of the 12 SCEs provides a performance report. Reporting formats were developed by UAC, discussed with the SCEs, and agreed upon. The fourth quarter reports will emphasize the undertakings of the JAR 2023. The consolidated report will be part of the reference document during the writing retreat.

As earlier stated, the synthesized report will be presented in the respective TWG meetings for validation before printing. The M&E TWG as an overarching team reviews the final report and these are its roles;

- Provide any additional relevant documents to the Consultant
- Analyse the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and other guidelines for monitoring and evaluation of HIV and AIDS-related activities to ensure that the report addresses all the indicators in the NSP
- Review the JAR report and provide input before the report is subjected to the approval processes

22 Funding for the NHAS 2024

Refer to the consolidated budget as attached.

JAR activities will be supported with funding from GOU mainly covering the data collection and writing process. Engagements are being done with UNAIDS to support the facilitator and venue for the writing process. Funding for Scientific Meeting activities and Philly Lutaaya Activities is also supported with funding from GoU. The resource mobilization team will harmonize the budget for different activities and mobilize additional resources to ensure that the full set of activities is supported.

23 Data abstraction from existing Software/ Management Information Systems

Several software programs are in existence to facilitate data collection and aggregation for the JAR process e.g. Gender Dashboard among others. The data from this software will be used to triangulate the data from DHIS 2, EMIS, and OVC MIS. Other dashboards like the Viral Load and SURGE will also be utilized to ensure a robust data collection system for a comprehensive report.

The JAR report must focus on the following key issues:

1. Demonstrate progress of the NSP along critical indicators using the GAM, Programme data, and all sources possible to reflect the real epidemic and response picture in the country. This will help the country to show trends, identify data contradictions, and identify areas that require improvement as we roll out the new NSP. This will further enable harmonization of the NSP and GAM indicators for routine progress tracking
2. Emphasis on new infections among key populations may lead to a concentrated epidemic putting into context the political /policy environment; including the laws governing operations and the reality

24 The JAR Presentation

This JAR Meeting will be convened during the symposium as part of the plenary sessions to discuss the report. All respective thematic reports will be presented and discussed. The JAR Meeting will be attended by key National Stakeholders including representatives of AIDS Development Partners, Non-Governmental Organizations, Ministries Departments and Agencies, selected districts, People living with HIV, and Implementing Partners among others.

25 Scientific Abstracts

For NHAS 2024, we will not issue a call for abstracts. Instead, we will examine last year's program and identify research studies to follow up on. Partners who made those presentations will be invited to provide updates on their studies. The scientific program will feature plenary sessions only. Up to 5 plenary presentations will be from invited speakers or UAC technical staff. The secretariat will review all presentation slides will be reviewed before the presentation.

26 Management of the JAR process

A JAR Secretariat to be located in the Directorate of Planning, Department of Monitoring & Evaluation with membership from all the directorates will be constituted

to coordinate the organization of the JAR and the Partnership Forum meetings. The Secretariat will further support the sectors in the compilation of the respective reports for presentation at JAR. Participants will be drawn from all constituencies of the National HIV/AIDS Partnership with a deliberate effort to ensure representation and participation from key public sectors, civil society, and private sector partners.

27 Summary of expected participants

No.	Category of participants	Number
1	Technical Working Groups	20
2	UAC technical staff and CCM	63
3	District delegates	42
4	MDAs	60
5	Parliament	10
6	Self-Coordinating Entities	15
7	AIDS Development Partners	20
8	High-Level guests	20
9	Cultural leaders	18
10	Young People	30
11	PLHIV	30
12	UAC Board	12
13	Scientists	45
14	Media	20
15	Religious leaders	10
16	CSOs	30

17	Private Sector	15
18	Presenters and session Chairs	15
		500

28 Documents/reports for the JAR

Several documents/reports will be reviewed for the 2024 JAR including;

- National HIV/ AIDS Strategic Plan (2020/21-2024/25).
- National Priority Action Plan (2020/21 - 2024/25)
- National Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (2020/21- 2024/25)
- Aide Memoire of the 2023 Joint AIDS Review
- Consolidated and Thematic Mid-Term Review reports on the National HIV/ AIDS Strategic Plan (2020/21 - 2024/25)
- The Country Progress Report 2023
- The Uganda HIV and AIDS Investment Case 2014 -2025
- SOPs 2016
- NASA Report
- The Modes of Transmission Report 2022

29 Expected outputs of the JAR

- A consolidated review report incorporating all comments from the JAR meeting including the Aide Memoire with key undertakings
- Dissemination plan for the JAR report
- Action plan for implementation of the undertakings detailing implementation and coordination centers including the Presidential Fast track activities as part of the JAR report

30 The Facilitator

One facilitator is required to guide the process of compiling the JAR report. The person must possess at least an advanced degree in the relevant field. Prior experience in working on HIV/AIDS projects/programs will be a pre-requisite. The facilitator should have experience in working in either of the following HIV interventions in Uganda: Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support, Social support, Infrastructure/systems/facilities development/monitoring & evaluation/costing, and Programming in conflict situations.

The facilitator must have the following general skills and competencies:

- In-depth understanding of the coordination and leadership of HIV and AIDS programs at global, regional, and national levels
- Good data collection, analytical, and report-writing skills
- A minimum of 8 years of work experience related to development programs
- Track record of completing similar assignments
- Experience in undertaking multi-country studies will be an added advantage.
- Team leader who has conducted at least three evaluations in the last five years ideally in the relevant field
- Experience preparing and analyzing a theory of change
- Advanced English writing and presentation skills are a requirement.
- Post graduate training(At Master level) in Public Health, Epidemiology or related field
- Experience in implementing or coordinating HIV Prevention Intervention
- An understanding of Treatment guidelines for HIV and their application in Uganda

31 JAR Deliverables

The consultants will submit the following reports:

1. An inception report (10-15 pages without annexes). The annexes must include data collection tools
2. PowerPoint Presentation for the JAR report not more than 30 Slides (5 x 8)
3. A final draft report of not more than 50 pages including an action plan for the undertakings without annexes), as per the agreed format

32 Expected Outputs from the NHAS 2024

- JAR Report for 2023/2024 presented and discussed
- Symposium Report
- Abstracts and presentations uploaded to the National HIV and AIDS Research Database
- Four regional scientific meetings held (Northern Eastern Western South-Western)
- Actionable recommendations for implementation by UAC in the remaining implementation period for the National HIV and AIDS Research Agenda 2020-2025

33 Expected Outcomes from NHAS 2024

- Improved partnership within the HIV and AIDS response through the partnership forum and exhibitions
- The capacity of junior scientists in HIV and AIDS to conduct and report research improved
- An improved understanding of the regional epidemics and the state of interventions through the regional meetings
- An improved understanding of the national epidemic through the national meeting and the JAR process

- Improved advocacy by different stakeholders on the HIV and AIDS Response