



Organizers of the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA)

**PRESS RELEASE:
THE SOCIETY FOR AIDS IN AFRICA (SAA) CALLS FOR URGENT FREE ACCESS TO
MONKEYPOX VACCINE TO THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES HIGHLY AT RISK.**



Date: 19th August 2024

EMBARGO: None (For immediate release)

The Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA), a leading pan-African non-governmental organization and the organizers of the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA), issues this urgent statement following the declarations of monkeypox outbreaks as a Public Health Emergency by the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The SAA recognizes the gravity of the situation and expresses its full support for the swift actions taken by both the Africa CDC and WHO to address the growing threat posed by the

monkeypox virus across the continent. The declaration of monkeypox as a Public Health Emergency of Continental Security by Africa CDC, and subsequently as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by WHO, underscores the urgent need for coordinated efforts to prevent further spread and mitigate the impact of the disease.

As an organization dedicated to combating HIV/AIDS, other STIs and viral emergent diseases the SAA emphasizes the importance of integrating monkeypox response strategies into existing public health frameworks. The ongoing experience in managing the HIV/AIDS epidemic has equipped African nations with valuable expertise that can be leveraged to tackle the monkeypox outbreak. The SAA calls for strengthened surveillance, reinforced infection prevention and control measures, enhanced laboratory capacities, and the mobilization of resources to support timely diagnosis, treatment, and vaccination efforts where applicable.

The SAA also urges governments, health institutions, and civil society organizations to prioritize community engagement and public education campaigns to combat misinformation and stigma associated with monkeypox. It is essential that vulnerable populations, including people living with HIV, children and key populations, especially those with large sexual networks receive priority attention and support during this period of heightened risk.

Furthermore, the SAA calls upon international partners and donors to provide the necessary financial and technical assistance to support Africa's response to the monkeypox outbreak especially with the access to treatment and vaccines. Global solidarity and cooperation are vital to ensuring that the continent is adequately prepared to address this public health challenge and prevent further loss of life, and the SAA is calling for urgent free access to monkeypox vaccine to the African countries highly at risk.

The SAA remains committed to working closely with all stakeholders to develop and implement comprehensive response strategies that safeguard the health and well-being of communities across Africa. In light of the upcoming ICASA 2025 conference, the SAA will ensure that monkeypox and its implications are thoroughly discussed, with the aim of fostering collaboration and innovation in addressing this and other emerging public health threats.

For more information, please contact:

Luc Armand H. Bodea

ICASA Director/SAA Coordinator

Email: lucbodea@saafrica.org

Permanent Secretariat) (Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA)

Website: www.saafrica.org

Office Direct: (+233)(0) 303 936 814

Mobile (+233) (0) 543 748 781

Email: info@saafrica.org

Accra- Ghana

The Society for AIDS in Africa was founded in 1989 at the fourth International Symposium on AIDS and Associated Cancers in Africa (now ICASA) held in Marseille France by a group of African scientists, activists, and advocates in response to the HIV epidemic. The establishment of the Society was the effect of the agitations of some African scientists for the conference to be organized on African soil. These agitations began in the preceding year at the third meeting held in Arusha, Tanzania in 1988. The cause of these scientists was supported by the then Director of WHO, Dr. Peter Piot.

At the 1990 conference held in the Democratic Republic of Congo, an Executive Committee was inaugurated to oversee the establishment of the Society and to coordinate subsequent International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA) conferences. The society was officially registered in Nairobi, Kenya with a functional Secretariat in Nigeria. The permanent secretariat of the Society for AIDS in Africa was established in 2009 in Accra – Ghana.