

“Not in Our Name” – African HIV Treatment Advocates React to Gilead’s Voluntary Licensing Agreement on Lenacapavir

Press Statement

4th October 2024

The announcement by Gilead that six generic manufacturers have been awarded voluntary licenses for the production of lenacapavir—a groundbreaking, twice-yearly injectable for HIV prevention and potential treatment—raises significant concerns despite the inclusion of most African countries in the license territory.

Exclusionary Practices: While most countries of the continent are part of the licensed territory, one African country, Algeria, has been excluded without any justification. Also, several other low- and middle-income countries in Latin America and Asia have been left out, despite the absence of granted patents, thus creating new and unmerited monopolies for Gilead. These exclusions establish unfair barriers to access that we cannot overlook.

Solidarity with Excluded Countries: As African treatment advocates, we recognize the potential impact of this license to waive patent protections in several countries and expedite access to generics. However, we stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Algeria but also in other excluded nations. No country should be left behind in access to life-saving medicines.

Concerns Over Supply Chain Dependence: We are concerned that out of the six licensed generic manufacturers, only one is based in Africa. This perpetuates Africa’s reliance on non-African manufacturers, undermining the continent’s ability to achieve self-sufficiency in drug manufacturing at a critical time when there is a strong call for local production and capacity building in Africa.

Access Barriers and Monopolistic Tactics: By binding key generic manufacturers to such agreements, Gilead is effectively locking supply options for excluded countries and restricting their ability to utilize compulsory licensing. This is a clear example of how Gilead’s so-called access strategies are being used to create and secure new monopolies, undermining the ability of countries to use TRIPS flexibilities such as compulsory licenses to address public health needs.

Call for True Global Access: Lenacapavir has the potential to be a game-changer for HIV prevention and HIV treatment in the future. Every person in need should be able to access it, regardless of where they live. Access strategies should prioritize the health needs of all people, not the monopolistic interests of pharmaceutical companies. We call on Gilead to revise its licensing strategy to include all excluded countries and manufacturers, and to commit to an approach that truly reflects global health equity.

As African HIV treatment advocates strongly denounce Gilead’s exclusionary tactics and reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that no person is left behind in the fight against HIV.

For further inquiries, contact twafula@kelinkenya.org; + 254 726 419173

Signed by the following organizations:

Aids and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA) - Regional
Association des Gestionnaires pour le Développement - Mauritania
Association marocaine de la vie positive (KAYNIN+) – Morocco
Association Tunisienne De Prévention Positive - Tunisia
Association rêve de vivre positive - Algeria
ATL MST SIDA TUNIS - Tunisia
Center for Health, Human Rights and Development (CEHURD) - Uganda
Coast Sex workers Alliance Kenya (COSWA-K)
Community Health Rights Advocacy (CHeRA) Malawi
Dandora community Aids support Association - Kenya
Dumaic Global Health (DGH) Uganda
ENDA Santé Senegal
Global Fund Advocates Network (GFAN)
Good Health Community Programmes Kenya
International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC-MENA) - Morocco
International Community of Women living with HIV - Kenya
Kenya Legal and Ethical Issues Network on HIV and AIDS (KELIN)
Key Population Consortium of Kenya [KPC]
LHL International, Norway
MENA Community (network of individuals living with HIV in Middle East and North Africa
Mouvement pour les Libertés Individuelles - Burundi
Nelson Mandela TB HIV Information CBO - Kenya
Network of TB Champions Kenya (NTBC-K)
Pamoja TB Group - Kenya
Pharmaceutical Association of Nigerian Students (PANS) - Nigeria
Ringa women fighting Aids group – Kenya
Réseau Africain des Personnes vivant avec le VIH Afrique de l'Ouest, (RAP+AO) / Network of
African People living with HIV West Africa, (NAP+WA)
Transform a Girl's Life (TAGL) – Kenya
Transgender Red Umbrella (TGRU.org), Morocco
Wote Youth Development Projects CBO Kenya