

SPEECH BY THE FIRST LADY VISIT TO WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV

AMEPOUH - YOPOUGON

Friday, February 1, 2019

Ladies and gentlemen,

My dear sisters,

I am very happy to pay a visit to **women living with HIV at the Amépouh center in the neighbourhood of Yopougon.**

First of all, I would like to convey to you the warm greetings of **my dear husband, President Alassane Ouattara.**

Now, I would like to acknowledge the presence of **Mr Aka AOUELE, Minister of Health and Public Hygiene,** and the presence of **Ms LY Ramata, Minister for Women, Family and Children.**

I would also like to greet and express my appreciation to **Mr Gilbert Kafana KONE, Minister in charge of Relations with the Institutions, Mayor of the Municipality of Yopougon,** for his warm welcome.

My greetings also go to **the wives of the Presidents of Institutions and to Ministers' wives** here with us.

I thank **the Ambassadors and Heads of Diplomatic Missions** for being here this morning.

I welcome **the representatives of the United Nations System agencies, and Directors of national and international Organizations involved in the fight against HIV / AIDS.**

I also welcome **Ms Brigitte QUENUM, UNAIDS Representative in Côte d'Ivoire.** She and her team regularly work with us in our efforts to combat AIDS.

I want to thank all the political, prefectural and administrative authorities here with us.

I also want to thank **our traditional and religious leaders** for their support through prayers and blessings.

Finally, I **extend my greetings to Ms OUSSOU Christine, President of the HIV positive women's group, and to the members of this network** that I congratulate for the great work they do. Thanks to **all our sisters** who have come to give us a warm welcome.

My dear sisters,

We came here to visit the **Amépouh centre, which is the headquarters of HIV positive women's group.** During this visit, I was touched and proud to see how much you care for one another in order to overcome together all the challenges that come up to you everyday.

I witness your courage and determination, and I urge you to continue in that direction.

As a woman, as a mother and as **UNAIDS special ambassador, your fight for survival and for the well-being of your families is also mine.** That's why **my advocacy on every international forum, whenever I get the opportunity, is the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and the fight against pediatric AIDS.**

So I would like to call on to all my sisters, all the women of Côte d'Ivoire, especially future mothers to get tested. Yes indeed, it is important for every woman to be tested, and every pregnant woman to follow prenatal consultations to ensure that the health of her child is preserved. Together, we must meet the challenge of early detection for mothers and children exposed to HIV in order to provide a sustainable response.

My dear sisters,

As we are all aware, the main consequence of HIV-AIDS is to increase household spending while reducing empowering capacities of our sisters.

Several households have paid the price in the fight against this disease, especially women and children. That is why it gives me hope to see you fighting for a better future.

It is a real pleasure for me to be here today, to express to you my solidarity and full support in the achievement of projects you undertake together.

I agree with your proposal to give my name to your center. I propose you call it : **Centre Amépouh Dominique OUATTARA.**

It is in this context that **we carried out the renovation of the main building of the center.** We also renewed the furniture, to allow you to live in better conditions with your children, and to undertake your daily activities.

We also came with **in kind donations worth 30 million FCFA,** which have just been listed. These donations will help you develop projects and improve your living conditions.

In addition, **200 million CFAF loan is given to your network "the coalition of women living with HIV", to help you develop your income-generating activities.** The amount will be distributed as follows:

- **100 million FCFA for the District of Abidjan,**
- **And 100 million FCFA for the countryside.**

In this context, **300 women have already been trained to manage their future activities.** In this way, we want to help them and promote their social and economic integration. I hope this significant effort **contribute to addressing the social and psychological situation of HIV-affected women, who are still marginalized.**

My dear sisters,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Before I end, **allow me to reiterate my thanks to all the key players in the fight against AIDS : the civil society, our national and international partners, as well as diplomatic representations and generous donors for their support.**

I take this opportunity to call to all parties, to continue his efforts to end AIDS in our countries. Because we must all take up the challenge to protect our people from the pandemic, and permanently eradicate this disease from our society.

As far as I am concerned, you can always count on my support.

Thank you.