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Graca in anti-Aids campaign

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JOHANNESBURG - Six African countries will be the focus of the latest HIV/Aids pediatric prevention campaign.

The Campaign to End Pediatric HIV/Aids (Cepa), was launched in Sandton yesterday, and was attended by various health officials from several African countries.

Graca Machel, who will chair the campaign's pan-African Leadership Council said: "On the continent we face a potential human, social, and economic devastation of Africa's future generations as a consequence of the impact of HIV and Aids on our children."

She added, government should be held accountable for the promises they made to children and put systems in place to implement what was promised to them.

Cepa, a non-profit organisation was launched as a network of civil society organisations at the national, regional and global levels.

The three-year campaign includes the initial focus of six African countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Zambia and Nigeria.

The purpose of the campaign is said to overcome implementation and "policy bottlenecks" to increasing coverage rates for prevention of mother-to-child transmission and pediatric treatment services from the average of 30 to 40% to Cepa's globally agreed target of 80%.

Dr Paul Zeitz, executive director of the Global Aids Alliance, responsible for providing financial and technical resources to civil organisations in the six focus countries, said their strategy was to engage countries at two different stages of scaling up pediatric and family HIV/Aids services – "tipping point countries" where scale-up of pediatric HIV/Aids services were well under way.

"The campaign will facilitate the cross-pollination of best practices and exchanges of ideas and knowledge among in-country partners, among countries of different stages of pediatric HIV epidemic and through local-to-global partnerships," he said. The National Advocacy Action Plans for 2010 will be launched by the campaign partners in the six focus countries.

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