



Promoting Peace, Security,
Stability and Development in the
Great Lakes Region

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OFFICIAL STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF ZERO DISCRIMINATION DAY

The Forum of Parliaments of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR) joins the international community in commemorating **Zero Discrimination Day**, observed annually on 1 March, a day dedicated to affirming the right of every individual to live a full, productive life with dignity, equality, and respect.

This year draws global attention to the persistent discrimination faced by people living with and at risk of HIV—discrimination that continues to undermine access to health services, violate fundamental human rights, and impede progress towards ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. The 2026 theme underscores a clear imperative: **to put people first**.

In the Great Lakes Region—where communities continue to grapple with the effects of conflict, displacement, poverty, and fragile health systems—such discrimination further deepens vulnerability. HIV-related stigma, when combined with gender inequality, places a disproportionate and often unrecognised burden of unpaid care on women and girls, reinforcing cycles of exclusion, economic insecurity, and social marginalisation.

The FP-ICGLR underscores that ending AIDS is not only a medical or technical challenge, but a matter of justice, equality, and human rights. Progress will remain limited as long as discriminatory laws, practices, and social norms persist. Addressing HIV-related stigma and discrimination therefore requires comprehensive responses that strengthen legal protections, promote gender equality, ensure respectful and rights-based health care, and empower affected communities—particularly women and girls—to claim their rights.

As a regional parliamentary body committed to peace, security, democratic governance, and social development, the FP-ICGLR reaffirms the critical role of parliaments in advancing enabling legal and policy frameworks, exercising oversight, promoting accountability, and fostering inclusive public dialogue. Parliamentary leadership is essential to ensuring that national HIV responses are grounded in human rights, gender equality, and the lived realities of those most affected.



On this Zero Discrimination Day, the FP-ICGLR calls for renewed commitment across the Great Lakes Region to place people at the center of HIV responses, to eliminate stigma and discrimination in all their forms, and to ensure that women and girls living with and affected by HIV are protected, respected, and empowered.

The General Secretariat.

