



Organisation of African First Ladies
Against HIV/AIDS (OAFLA)
Organisation des Premières Dames
D'Afrique contre le VIH/SIDA (OPDAS)

Alere to Support Organisation of African First Ladies Against HIV/AIDS (OAFLA) in New Effort to End Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV and Syphilis

*100,000 HIV/Syphilis Duo Rapid Tests Donated to African First Ladies to Launch OAFLA's
Push to Eliminate Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV and Syphilis in Their Countries*

NEW YORK, September 23, 2014 – Representatives from the [Organisation of African First Ladies Against HIV/AIDS, UNAIDS](#), the [International Planned Parenthood Federation \(IPPF\)](#) and Alere (NYSE: ALR), the world leader in rapid HIV screening and diagnostics products, today called for intensified efforts to increase awareness of HIV status in young people, reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS on the continent and, in particular, eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV. At the "African First Ladies Advocating for Health" conference held here, Alere announced that it will initially donate 100,000 HIV/Syphilis Duo Rapid tests to countries in Africa to support OAFLA's efforts to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS and syphilis, help pregnant women and adolescent girls know their HIV status and reduce child mortality in the continent.

"African First Ladies have reaffirmed our commitment today to help end the epidemic of AIDS by 2030, eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV and increase access to HIV testing, care and treatment for children and adolescents," said Her Excellency, Madame Hinda Deby Itno, First Lady of the Republic of Chad and OAFLA President. "And as solidarity among partner organizations is of paramount importance, we have pledged to work closely with various UN agencies, the African Union Commission, in-country and international development agencies and the private sector."

"We are honored to support Africa's First Ladies in their renewed effort to reduce maternal and child mortality, end mother-to-child HIV infections, and work towards the elimination of congenital syphilis." said Namal Nawana, Alere Interim CEO. "It's an important part of Alere's commitment to helping people know their HIV status and linking infected individuals to life-saving anti-retroviral therapy."

The World Health Organization (WHO) has called for the elimination of maternal-to-child transmission (MTCT) of HIV and syphilis to urgently improve health outcomes for mothers and children. The WHO's Global Elimination of Congenital Syphilis initiative calls for eliminating congenital syphilis as a public health problem through reduction of prevalence of syphilis in pregnant women and by the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of syphilis.¹

“We are stepping up our efforts to meet the WHO goals of eliminating new HIV infections in children by 2015 and keeping their mothers alive. Alere’s diagnostic products play a vital role in enabling effective service delivery for prevention of mother-to-child transmission, from initial HIV detection to ongoing monitoring during treatment. Additionally the implementation of dual testing of HIV and Syphilis will better enable us to work towards the elimination of congenital syphilis,” said Avi Pelossof, Alere Global President of Infectious Disease. “We are focused on developing and providing affordable, point-of-care diagnostics spanning the HIV continuum of care so clinicians and healthcare workers in the field can leverage the power of real-time information and make faster therapeutic decisions that can improve health outcomes and save lives.”

HIV/AIDS and Syphilis among African Women, Adolescent Girls and Children

Globally, 1.4 million pregnant women have active syphilis and almost 1.5 million pregnant women are HIV infected. Both HIV and syphilis can be transmitted during pregnancy to the fetus. Additionally, syphilis infection during pregnancy increases the risk of mother-to-child HIV transmission by 180%.² In sub-Saharan Africa, 260,000 African children are infected with HIV each year. Mother to Child Transmission (MTCT) occurs through pregnancy, labor, delivery and breast feeding. In fact, breast-feeding alone increases the risk of MTCT by 12%-43%.³ Maternal syphilis infection can cause stillbirth, neonatal death, prematurity, low birth weight or congenital syphilis. The impact of maternal syphilis can be prevented by testing early in pregnancy, treating seropositive pregnant women, and preventing re-infection.^{4,5}

Forty percent of pregnant women living with HIV have not received anti-retrovirals to reduce mother to child transmission during pregnancy.⁶ Without any intervention, up to 45% of infants born to mothers living with HIV will become infected. Early infant diagnosis (EID) and linkage to HIV treatment are key to keeping children with HIV alive and healthy, yet EID coverage remains at less than 20% in almost half of the priority [Global Plan](#) countries. Young adolescent girls are one of the most vulnerable groups across the high-priority countries with less than 40% of adolescents knowing their HIV status.⁷

About OAFLA

Organization of African First Ladies Against HIV/AIDS (OAFLA) was established by African First Ladies as a collective voice for Africa’s most vulnerable people, women and children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. Today, OAFLA has more than forty (40) African First Ladies as its active members, each leading her national chapter to do exemplary work in the areas of HIV and AIDS, maternal and child health, cervical cancer and empowering women and children.

Alere and HIV

Alere is the world leader in rapid HIV screening. Alere’s innovative diagnostic products are revolutionizing HIV chronic disease management at the point-of-care. From screening to monitoring and co-morbidities, Alere is at the forefront of HIV prevention strategy. Alere’s portfolio of diagnostic products makes it possible to manage, monitor and follow-up HIV infected patients. Leveraging the power of real-time data, clinicians and healthcare workers in the field can enable faster therapeutic decisions that lead to improved health outcomes — and ultimately help individuals live healthier lives — no matter where they are.

Alere's SD Bioline HIV/Syphilis Duo rapid test is an efficient and economic diagnostic tool that allows HIV pregnant women to be screened for both HIV and syphilis simultaneously and delivers actionable results to clinicians at the point-of-care — enabling them to treat patients promptly in the remotest parts of the world.

Alere's global leading rapid diagnostic products and services, as well as its new product development efforts, focus on infectious disease, cardiometabolic disease and toxicology. Alere is headquartered in Waltham, Massachusetts. For more information regarding Alere, please visit www.alere.com.

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¹ World Health Organization (WHO). The global elimination of congenital syphilis: rationale and strategy for action. <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/rtis/9789241595858/en/>. Accessed September 10, 2014.

² Mwapasa V, Rogerson SJ, Kwiek JJ, et al. Maternal syphilis infection is associated with increased risk of mother-to-child transmission of HIV in Malawi. *Aids* 2006; 20(14): 1869-77.

³ Maputle MS, Jali MN. Pregnant women's knowledge about mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) of HIV infection through breast feeding. *Curationis*. 2008;31(1):45-51.

⁴ De Santis M, De Luca C, Mappa I, et al. Syphilis Infection during pregnancy: fetal risks and clinical management. *Infectious diseases in obstetrics and gynecology* 2012; 2012: 430585.

⁵ Gomez GB, Kamb ML, Newman LM, Mark J, Broutet N, Hawkes SJ. Untreated maternal syphilis and adverse outcomes of pregnancy: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 2013; 91(3): 217-26.

⁶ 2013 Progress Report on the Global Plan. UNAIDS 2013.

⁷ UNICEF, Unite for Children, Unite Against AIDS. Towards an AIDS-Free Generation, report highlights. *Children and AIDS, Sixth Stocktaking Report* 2013.