

America announces end to all health funding in Zimbabwe - says it respects government decision to decline MOU

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The hallway of a public hospital in Harare (file photo) by Gamuchirai Masiyiwa/GPIZimbabwe

AMERICA will, at the end of this month, stop funding all health programmes in Zimbabwe it has been involved in for more than 20 years, Ambassador Pamela Tremont has revealed.

Zimbabwe, last year, declined the United States' new funding model, a health memorandum of understanding (MoU) that seeks to gradually transfer health funding to third-world governments while ensuring sustainability.

America played a central role in the fight against HIV by providing anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs), PEP and PrePs, allowances for health workers, condoms, and other family planning methods that have become common in Zimbabwe.

This has been the major reason behind Zimbabwe achieving more than 95% epidemic control.

"For more than two decades, the United States and Zimbabwe have worked together to strengthen health systems and expand access to HIV prevention, care, and treatment," said Tremont, who spoke at an event held at her residence.

"Because of that, Zimbabwe has achieved HIV epidemic control, with more than 95% of people living with HIV receiving treatment.

"That is a tremendous achievement, and we should all be proud of what we have done together.

"The priority now is to sustain these gains through strong national systems, continued access to quality services, and Zimbabwean leadership."

Due to this support, Zimbabwe has achieved regional leader status in the region in the fight against HIV.

Some 97% of people living with HIV know their status, 98% of diagnosed people receive antiretroviral therapy (ART) and 96% of people on treatment have suppressed viral loads.

Added Tremont: "As most of you by now know, the United States has changed the way it delivers health assistance around the world, with a new Health MOU structure that creates partnerships with and co-investment from recipient countries.

"With Zimbabwe's decision to decline a bilateral health MOU, U.S.-supported health programs will conclude at the end of September.

"We respect Zimbabwe's sovereign decision, and my health team from the Embassy is working diligently with the Ministry of Health and Child Care and other partners to ensure a thorough and responsible handover."

After months long negotiations for the Health MoU, government trashed the offer for shared funding and publicly misrepresented that the United States had sought health data and key minerals in exchange.

According to documents gleaned by this publication, that was not the case.

Its exit from health funding does not mean its exit from Zimbabwe as has been witnessed, with the closing of other embassies.

The United States will now be shifting towards business and investments.

"The United States Embassy will be here to pursue areas of mutual interest with the government and people of Zimbabwe for years to come," said Tremont.

"And there are tremendous opportunities that lie before us.

"The U.S.-Zimbabwe relationship now pivots: from one largely focused on health and humanitarian assistance, to one built on broader economic, trade and investment opportunities to drive prosperity for Zimbabweans and Americans alike.

"This marks the beginning of that new chapter."

*Read the **original article** on **New Zimbabwe**.*

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