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## Special Message

by

Her Excellency, Clar Marie Weah  
First Lady of the Republic of Liberia

On the Occasion

Marking the commemoration of

### World AIDS Day 2018

Under the theme:

“Know Your Status”

“Do Your Test”

My fellow Liberians, HIV/AIDS poses serious threat to our population. Our young people, especially the women, are the most affected.

According to the National AIDS Commission, over 40,000 people, including more than 30,000 youth and adolescents, are living with HIV/AIDS in Liberia.

Each year, it is estimated, that over 2,000 people get infected with the virus. This is alarming!

As your first Lady, it is my duty to advocate to help keep our country safe from HIV.

My goal is to advocate for an urgent attention and immediate collective action to address the HIV/AIDS pandemics we are faced with today.

As we commemorate this year's World AIDS Day, let's pay tribute to our brothers and sisters who lost their lives to HIV/AIDS.

We must also show solidarity to our friends living with HIV/AIDS by loving and caring for them.

On this day, fellow Liberians, we must appreciate our health workers, local and international partners working to end this scourge.

My message to you is 'Get tested and know your Status,' which is also the theme for this year's world AIDS Day celebration.

Doing your test now and as often as possible is the first step towards the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS.

Don't be afraid of what the result may be. Be courageous and get tested.

If you are tested positive of HIV, it is not the end of your life. You can access treatment to help you live a long and healthy life.

If you are tested negative, you can also move on with your life but more carefully and cautiously. However, testing negative does not make you immune to getting HIV. You must stay safe at all times and do your test regularly.

Fellow citizens, let's stop stigma and discrimination!  
Remember, HIV/AIDS does not discriminate; anyone can contract the virus.

AIDS is everyone's business. It is your responsibility. Do not rely on the government only to eradicate the pandemic. We as a society must take charge.

Raising awareness and committing ourselves to end HIV/AIDS must go beyond world AIDS Day. It must be part of our everyday life. We must not only talk about HIV/AIDS but also take actions to end it.

To my young ladies between ages 12 and 21, I want you to know that biologically at this point in your growth you are vulnerable to the virus than adult women. Your body is still growing, making it easier to absorb the virus.

Abstain from sex until you are married. Be faithful to your partner, avoid unsafe sex and always use condom. Take precautions and protect yourselves at all times. Prevention is key!

As your first lady, I remain committed to leading the fight against HIV/AIDS.

I also call on every-one of you, my people, to join me in the quest to make our country free of HIV/AIDS and be an example to the rest of the world.

Thank you!

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