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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **2017 World AIDS Day: Ambassador Asks Students to Stop the Spread of HIV**

U.S. Mission Nigeria commemorated World AIDS Day today with the theme “*Behavior Change for Epidemic Control.*” The program took place at the Government Secondary School Wuse Zone 3, Abuja, involving more than 200 Senior Secondary School students from 10 public secondary schools across the metropolis as well as key Government of Nigeria officials from the education and health sectors.

Ambassador W. Stuart Symington formally donated sets of science books to the school library of each of the participating schools. He also gave remarks on the importance of HIV prevention among young people. The Ambassador advised the students to play an active role in stopping the spread of HIV in Nigeria. “Here is what you can do about it ... take an oath today ... make this disease stop with you. Prevent it!”

Despite the decrease in AIDS-related mortality and morbidity worldwide, HIV has not been eliminated; a third of the new infections around the globe are among young people between the age of 15-24, and prevention remains key to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Each World AIDS Day, the U.S. Mission Nigeria honors those who have lost their lives to AIDS and renew its commitment to continue to assist those who are living with or at risk of HIV/AIDS. Since its inception in 2014, the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDs Relief (PEPFAR) has disbursed more than \$5.1 billion to Nigeria in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and is currently supporting more than 770,000 of the 1,000,000 men, women, and children on HIV treatment in the country.

Relevant information about U.S. policies and programs in Nigeria can be found on our websites: <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov> and [www.usaid.gov/ng](http://www.usaid.gov/ng)

PEPFAR's approach to HIV prevention in Nigeria focuses on treatment, prevention-of-mother-to-child transmission, as well as increased awareness among the groups who are highly at-risk especially adolescent girls and young women in states with high concentrations of the epidemic.

Through the work of PEPFAR, the American government and people have helped save and improve millions of lives, in addition to transforming the global HIV/AIDS response. For the first time in modern history, there is an opportunity to change the very course of a pandemic by controlling it without a vaccine or a cure. The end of HIV/AIDS as a public health threat is finally in sight.

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