

African Grandmothers TRIBUNAL

Stephen Lewis Foundation Tribunal Statement of Commitment

Friends, Judges, and Grandmothers,

We have heard your voices and I know all of us feel the searing sting of injustice, the agony of loss, and the profound determination, strength and love that you have brought to meet the ravages of AIDS in your families and communities. The tenacity and intelligence of your responses to the scourge of AIDS are breathtaking, and we could not be prouder in this moment to stand here with you as a witness and passionate allies in the struggle.

Grandmothers are the lynchpins of survival in your communities, we have long known that, and today, you have brought home so strongly the powerful truth that grandmothers are the experts on what it will take to resurrect your communities, to reach those who are isolated and traumatized, to provide succour and hope, and to demand the systemic changes that will ensure a profound shift in the quality of life for those on the frontlines of the AIDS pandemic now and into the future.

We know that you speak for millions of grandmothers and the organizations supporting them. We understand that this is not an exercise in charity or benevolence – the threshold of tolerance for injustice must be shattered today, and the resources and support you require to effect change in the face of AIDS, and to be consulted and counted in the responses to the pandemic must be acted upon.

We will take up your call to action and the recommendations of the judges and we will not rest until the world comes to its senses and the support that should and must come is yours. You have given us a clear agenda for support – whether it's a global fund for cash transfers, the need for resources for your national level advocacy, the continuing urgency for land rights and housing, access to healthcare, universal and accessible education, food security, and laws protecting grandmothers from violence *and* the means to enforce them.

Today we commit to you anew.

All of us at the Foundation, and I know the Canadian Grandmothers are with us – will not rest until you have the justice you demand.

We commit to redouble our efforts and to bend every fibre of our collective beings to break the inertia, the silence, and the dam of neglect and negligence that prevents the flood of resources from flowing. We will be accountable to you, and heed you, as must now the world.

—Delivered by Ilana Landsberg-Lewis, Executive Director and Co-Founder of the Stephen Lewis Foundation, at the African Grandmothers Tribunal. September 7, 2013, Vancouver, British Columbia.