



CONCEPT NOTE ON THE SIDE EVENT: UGANDA–CANADA PARTNERSHIPS ADVANCING HIV CURE RESEARCH, HEALTH INNOVATION, AND INDUSTRIAL CAPACITY

Date: Tuesday, 14 July 2026

Time: 1:15pm – 2:45PM EST

Venue: Uganda House, Permanent Mission of Uganda to the United Nations, New York

Format: Hybrid (In-person and Zoom)

Host: Permanent Mission of the Republic of Uganda to the United Nations

Co-Hosts:

- Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda
- Ministry of Health, Uganda
- Uganda High Commission to Canada, Ottawa
- Joint Clinical Research Centre (JCRC), Uganda
- Western University, Canada (Africa Institute and Frugal Biomedical Innovations)

Background & Rationale

A Transformative Moment for Global Health Equity

Uganda and particularly the Joint Clinical Research Centre (JCRC) has demonstrated strong leadership in HIV research, public health delivery, and regional health systems strengthening. JCRC implemented the world's first PEPFAR-funded HIV treatment program, conducted more than 100 clinical trials, and built one of the region's most advanced, internationally accredited laboratory networks. Canada brings complementary strengths in scientific discovery, biomedical engineering, global health research, and innovation ecosystems.

Through ongoing collaboration between the **Joint Clinical Research Centre (JCRC)**, the Uganda Ministry of Health, Western University (Canada), and other Canadian academic and private sector partners have developed the ambitious [IMMUNEQUITY](#) HIV cure “moonshot” initiative has been developed. This cross-continental effort integrates gene therapy, immunology, and biomedical engineering to create scalable, affordable, and globally accessible cure strategies. Together, Uganda and Canada are demonstrating how SDG 17 partnerships can advance breakthrough science while strengthening health systems, industrial capacity, and health sovereignty.

Beyond scientific discovery, IMMUNEQUITY seeks to strengthen local research, manufacturing, and biomedical engineering capacity while informing policy, regulatory, intellectual property and equitable access frameworks for next-generation HIV therapies. By embedding access planning,

regulatory alignment, and affordability from the outset, the initiative aims to ensure that future breakthroughs reach those who need them most.

Why now?

Despite major progress in HIV treatment, lifelong antiretroviral therapy is not a sustainable endpoint. Rising costs, long-term adherence challenges, and funding uncertainties underscore the urgency of investing in curative strategies and locally anchored innovation systems.

IMMUNEQUITY demonstrates how **Uganda-led priorities**, supported by Canada's scientific and innovation ecosystem and grounded in equitable partnerships, can advance breakthrough science while building the capacity needed to deliver health impact at scale.

2. Objectives of the Side Event

General Objective: To demonstrate how equitable Uganda-Canada partnerships are advancing HIV cure research and to catalyze global commitments toward financing, policy alignment, technology transfer, and capacity strengthening required to deliver scalable and accessible cure solutions, while advancing SDGs 3, 9, and 17.

Specific Objectives

1. Showcase Uganda's leadership and Canada's contributions to advancing HIV cure research through equitable scientific partnerships.
2. Highlight the IMMUNEQUITY HIV Cure Moonshot as a model for integrating scientific discovery, biomedical engineering, and access to accelerate equitable health innovation.
3. Explore policy, regulatory, local manufacturing and financing pathways needed to support next-generation HIV therapies and strengthen health sovereignty.
4. Showcase student exchanges and next-generation leadership as essential investments for strengthening future scientific and innovation ecosystems.

Key Themes / Areas of Focus

Three Sustainable Development Goals, One Integrated Mission

This initiative provides a timely platform to demonstrate how **SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals) under in-depth review at the 2026 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development accelerates progress toward health outcomes and industrial capacity, creating a virtuous cycle of innovation, access, and sovereignty.

SDG 17 — Partnerships as Infrastructure

Partnerships are not peripheral but are foundational. Through co-created research agendas, shared governance, capacity strengthening in biomedical engineering and clinical research, and long-term institutional collaboration, Uganda and Canada are building the infrastructure needed for sustainable innovation.

SDG 3 — HIV Cure as a Global Public Good

These partnerships are advancing HIV cure research, strengthening clinical trial readiness, integrating diagnostics and treatment pathways, and reinforcing health systems to ensure that future curative therapies are accessible to all.

SDG 9 — Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Scientific breakthroughs must be matched by local industrial capacity. The initiative is supporting biomedical engineering workforce development, technology transfer, regional biomanufacturing and medical device ecosystems to reduce dependence on external supply chains and enable equitable access through sovereign health systems.

3. Program of Proceedings

Time	Activity	Lead
1:00–1:15 PM	Arrival and Registration	Permanent Mission of Uganda to the UN
1:15–1:20 PM	Welcome Remarks	Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Uganda to the United Nations
1:20 – 1:25 PM	Remarks	Amb. Allan Kajik , Uganda Acting Head of Mission to Ottawa, Canada.
1:25-1:30 PM	Statement from Ministry of Health Uganda	Ministry of Health Uganda
1:30–1:35 PM	Address by the Guest of Honour	Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda
1:35–1:40 PM	Keynote Presentation	Dr. Cissy Kityo , Executive Director, Joint Clinical Research Centre, Uganda
1:40 –2:35 PM	Moderated Discussion and Audience Q&A	Moderator: Dr. Margaret Mutumba, Director, Africa Institute & Frugal Biomedical Innovations, Western University, Canada Panelists Dr. Cissy Kityo, Executive Director, Joint Clinical Research Centre, Uganda Dr. Robert Ssekitoleko, Head, Biomedical Engineering, Makerere University, Uganda Dr. Eric Arts, Professor and Canada Research Chair, Western University, Canada Dr. James Lacefield, Director, School of Biomedical Engineering, Western University, Canada Next Generation Leaders: Mr. Joshua Lutaakome Jaloba, PhD Candidate, Western University / Joint Clinical Research Centre

		• Mr. Henry Roger Ssemunywa , MSc Candidate, Microbiology and Immunology, Engineering Health Equity Fellow, Western University
2:35–2:45 PM	Closing Reflections and Call to Action	Office of the Prime Minister / Ambassador Godfrey Kwoba

4. Significance of the side event

This event will also serve as a platform for aligning global stakeholders, governments, donors, academia, and industry around actionable investment and policy pathways for HIV cure development and deployment.

This event will:

- Highlight Uganda’s leadership in health research and innovation
- Showcase Canada’s contributions to equitable global health research and capacity strengthening.
- Demonstrate partnerships grounded in reciprocity, co-development, and shared scientific leadership.
- Elevate African-led HIV cure research on a global stage
- Showcase Youth and Next-generation collaboration
- Global visibility for Uganda-led Research advancing integrated SDG implementation

5. Target Audience and Anticipated Outcomes

Target audience:

- Member States;
- UN agencies and partners (UNAIDS, WHO and UNDP);
- Development finance institutions, foundations and impact investors;
- African diaspora networks, academia and private-sector innovators.

Anticipated outcomes:

- Increased global visibility of African-led HIV cure research, innovation ecosystems, and SDG 9 industrial capacity.
- Recognition of a Canada–Africa model of collaboration based on co-development and shared scientific leadership.
- New partnerships and expressions of interest from governments, funders, industry, and academic institutions.
- Expanded opportunities for technology transfer, regulatory harmonization, and local manufacturing capacity.

Reference Documents

- [Western leads new international, public-private initiative for equitable access to HIV cure](#)
- [Less than a dozen people got the only HIV cure that exists. Canadian scientists are trying to change that](#) (The Toronto Star)

Contacts

- **Dr. Cissy Kityo**, Executive Director, Joint Clinical Research Centre, ckityo@jcrc.org.ug
- **Dr. Eric Arts**, Professor and Canada Research Chair in HIV Pathogenesis and Viral Control, Western University, earts@uwo.ca
- **Dr. Robert Ssekitoleko**, Head, Biomedical Engineering, School of Biomedical Sciences, Makerere University, rsseki@gmail.com
- **Dr. James Lacefield**, Professor and Director, School of Biomedical Engineering, Western University, jlacefie@uwo.ca
- **Dr. Margaret Mutumba**, Professor and Director, Africa Institute and Frugal Biomedical Innovations, Western University, mmutumba@uwo.ca

Speaker Biographies

Dr. Cissy Kityo

Executive Director, Joint Clinical Research Centre, Uganda

Dr. Kityo is one of Africa's leading physician-scientists in HIV research and clinical care. Under her leadership, JCRC has become a globally recognized center for HIV research, diagnostics, and health systems innovation. She is leading Uganda's contribution to the IMMUNEQUITY HIV Cure Moonshot.

Dr. Eric Arts

Professor and Canada Research Chair in HIV Pathogenesis and Viral Control, Western University

Dr. Arts is an internationally recognized for his contributions to HIV virology and translational research. His work focuses on developing innovative and equitable approaches to HIV cure research through international scientific collaboration. He has been collaborating with Dr. Kityo and JCRC on this research for almost 30 years.

Dr. Robert Ssekitoleko

Head, Biomedical Engineering, School of Biomedical Sciences, Makerere University, Uganda

is a biomedical engineer and leader in medical device innovation and capacity strengthening. He leads Makerere University's Biomedical Engineering Unit and is committed to developing affordable, context-appropriate technologies and advancing biomedical engineering education and research across Uganda and Sub-Saharan Africa. His work spans medical device design, prototyping, clinical evaluation, and mentorship of the next generation of innovators.

Dr. James Lacefield

Professor and Director, School of Biomedical Engineering, Western University, Canada

Dr. Lacefield is an experienced biomedical engineer and professor whose work focuses on medical imaging, biomedical innovation, and interdisciplinary approaches to engineering health solutions. He has been instrumental in advancing frugal biomedical innovations and strengthening biomedical engineering research and education partnerships across Africa.

Dr. Margaret Mutumba

Professor and Director, Africa Institute and Frugal Biomedical Innovations, Western University

Dr. Margaret Mutumba is a global health scholar, innovator and institutional leader advancing strategic partnerships in research, innovation, and capacity strengthening between Canada and

African institutions. Her work champions equitable, African-led approaches to global health innovation.

Joshua Lutaakome Jaloba

PhD Candidate, Western University / Joint Clinical Research Centre, Uganda

Joshua's doctoral research working on a HIV-virus-like particle (HLP) therapeutic for Uganda and contributes to HIV research and capacity strengthening between Uganda and Canada.

Henry Roger Ssemunywa

MSc Candidate, Microbiology and Immunology, Engineering Health Equity, Western University

Henry's research focuses on 3D bioprinting to create a physiologic human foreskin model to study viral infections and microbiome interactions His work reflects the importance of investing in future leaders in biomedical innovation.



OFFICIAL SIDE EVENT AT UN HLPF 2026



Scan to register

UGANDA–CANADA PARTNERSHIPS ADVANCING HIV CURE RESEARCH, HEALTH INNOVATION, AND INDUSTRIAL CAPACITY



Chief Guest

Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja
Prime Minister, Republic of Uganda



21st July, 2025

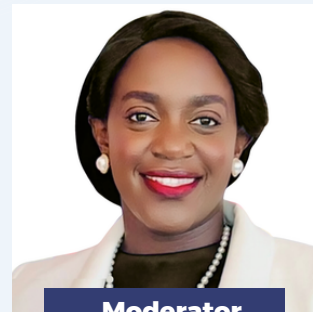


1:30pm - 3:30pm (NY Time)



**Uganda House - Uganda Mission in
New York.**

**Organized by
Government of Uganda, Western University,
JCRC and Makerere University**



Moderator

Dr. Margaret Mutumba
Director, Africa Institute and
Frugal Biomedical Innovations

Guest Speakers



H.E. Amb. Adenia Ayebare

Uganda's Permanent Representative
to the UN



H.E. Amb. Alan Kajik

Uganda High Commission to Canada,
Ottawa



Dr. Cissy Kityo

Executive Director, Joint Clinical
Research Institute



Dr. Eric Arts

Canada Research Chair /
Professor, Western University

Panelists



Dr. James Lacefield

Director, School of Biomedical
Engineering, Western University



Dr. Robert Ssekitoleko

Head, School of Biomedical
Sciences, Makerere University



Joshua Lutaakome Jaloba

PhD Candidate, Western University / Joint
Clinical Research Centre, Uganda



Henry Roger Ssemunywa

MSc, Microbiology & Immunology,
Engineering Health Equity, Western

REGISTER NOW: <https://bit.ly/4wga5el>

IMMUNEQUITY

HIV CURE FOR ALL

Transforming global access to immune therapies through frugal biomedical innovation

An HIV cure the world can actually afford — co-designed and made in Africa and Canada, for everyone.

40M

people living
with HIV

65%

in sub-Saharan
Africa

10

cured to date with
risky procedure

\$350,000+

cure cost per patient today

~30M

lives we could save

Immune therapies that could cure HIV are risky and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars per patient — out of reach for most health care systems, and far beyond the reach of the countries bearing the heaviest burden. As global funding for HIV medications wanes, an affordable cure has never been more urgent.

Our approach: frugal innovation + equity from the start

Designed for global access — the science and its delivery engineered by Canadian and Ugandan scientists, engineers and communities from day one. Committed to reaching every person living with HIV, regardless of who they are or what they earn.

A CURE THAT WORKS

Develop a targeted, cost-effective therapy that exposes hidden HIV, then destroys it.

MADE AFFORDABLY, MADE LOCALLY

Apply frugal innovation in medical technology to produce and deliver the cure in Canada and Uganda.

BUILT TO LAST

Develop IP, regulatory and health policy frameworks and strengthen capacity to manufacture the treatment everywhere it is needed.

A Canada–Uganda partnership

Western University · Joint Clinical Research Centre (Uganda) · University of British Columbia
Makerere University (Uganda) · University of Manitoba · University of Ottawa
Université de Montréal · Community Advisory Boards — with international collaborators.

Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SDG 3

Good Health and
Well-being

SDG 4

Quality Education

SDG 8

Decent Work and
Economic Growth

SDG 9

Industry,
Innovation and
Infrastructure

SDG 10

Reduced
Inequalities

SDG 17

Partnerships for
the Goals

**Seeking partners and investment to bring
an affordable HIV cure to those who need it most.**

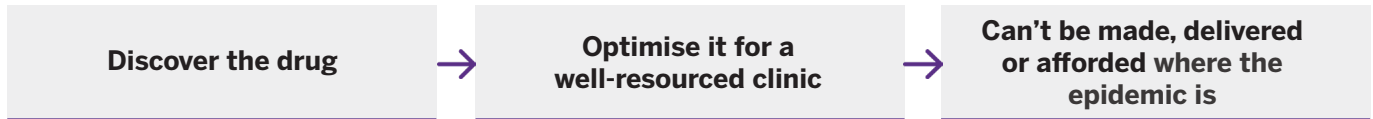


Why IMMUNEQUITY is different

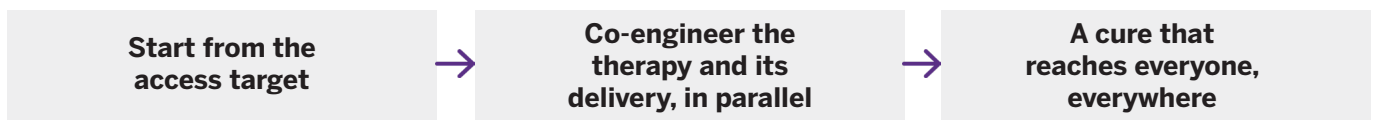
We invert the sequence

Most medical innovation programs consider access last — and fail there. We start with access, building it in from the very beginning, co-developed with Ugandan and Canadian partners.

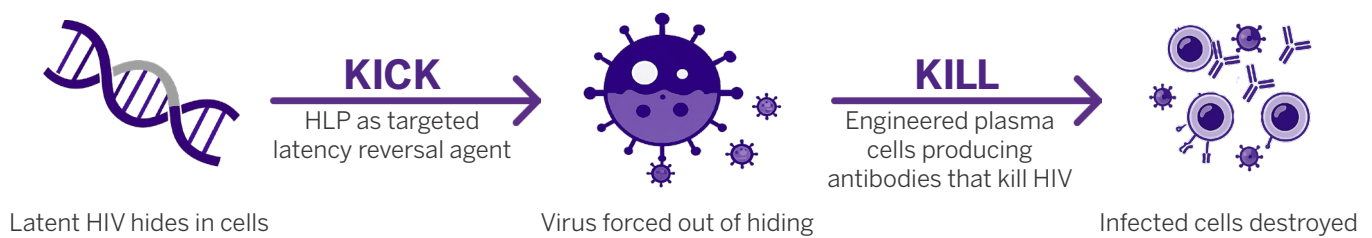
THE USUAL PATH



IMMUNEQUITY



Cure Strategy: targeted, effective “KICK and KILL”



Transformative Technology: with those who need it, for where needed



Equity by design: IP, economics, and community from day one



Join us in bringing an affordable HIV cure to the world!

