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**STATEMENT
BY**

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at

High - level Meeting on HIV/AIDS

**New York
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**Mr. President,
Secretary - General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great honor to address you today on behalf of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to briefly inform you on achievements in combating HIV/AIDS in Bosnia and Herzegovina accomplished so far.

According to all relevant criteria, Bosnia and Herzegovina belongs to a group of countries with a relative low risk of HIV/AIDS prevalence, meaning that the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Bosnia and Herzegovina does not exceed 5 % of any defined subpopulation.

The first AIDS case in Bosnia and Herzegovina was registered in 1986 and the first HIV - positive person was identified in 1989.

Currently, 101 person is registered as HIV infected in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Despite a low range of disease and risks, further transmission and spreading of HIV infection in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be influenced by bad socio-economic status, insufficient education, inadequate assessment of problem of groups at risk, migration, inadequate monitoring system of HIV/AIDS, stigma and silence, and lack of legislation for HIV/AIDS.

This is mostly due to the 1992-1995 devastating war in Bosnia and Herzegovina when the entire human, economic, political, social and health system suffered enormous damage.

The activities on HIV/AIDS were intensified in 2000 in terms of more active fulfillment of obligations foreseen by different international documents and declarations. (UN Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000; European Action Programme: Accelerated Action on HIV/AIDS of 27 June 2002 and South East Europe Declaration on HIV/AIDS Prevention of 8 June 2002).

In 2001 a more active response of international agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina on HIV/AIDS (UNMIBH, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, UNHCR, UNESCO, ILO, UNDCO, OHCHR and the WB, IFRC and IOM) was marked by establishment of the UN Thematic Group on HIV/AIDS.

Their main goal is to enable mechanisms of coordination and common planes in order to support state commitment in combating HIV/AIDS, and to promote long-term goals of UNAIDS.

The "Bosnia and Herzegovina Strategy to Prevent and Combat HIV/AIDS" is the main document on which activities and projects related to this field are based. In 2000 the Advisory Board for HIV/AIDS was established at the state level involving representatives from both governmental and non-governmental sector.

Taking into account obligations of Bosnia and Herzegovina deriving from UN membership, current HIV/AIDS situation in the country, financial and other resources available, the strategic goals for combating HIV/AIDS were defined for the period 2004 - 2009 and certain results have already been achieved.

The main strategic goals are to:

- Prevent HIV transmission and spreading. In the period to come we are planning to dedicate more attention to the health of young people, focusing on at risk groups. Bosnia and Herzegovina will commit itself to link youth friendly oriented services with voluntary counseling and testing services. Attention will also be focused on enhancement of access to sexual and reproductive health, both through formal and informal education;
- Ensure adequate treatment, care and support to people living with HIV/AIDS. In this regard Bosnia and Herzegovina prepared a Plan of Universal Access to Prevention, Treatment and Care presented at the meeting held in Bucharest (Romania) in March 2006. In accordance with this, medicines are free of charge to those with HIV/AIDS, and all costs are covered by Health Insurance Fund (In Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina);
- Create legal framework for protection of ethic principles and human rights of people living with HIV/AIDS;
- Ensure coordination and development of sustainable capacities to fight HIV/AIDS and to strengthen cooperation with international organizations.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina Advisory Board for HIV/AIDS has proclaimed Year 2006 as the Year of fight against stigma and discrimination.

In this regard, in collaboration with international organizations, different trainings are organized all over the state for health and other professionals in order to increase awareness and knowledge on HIV/AIDS. There are also trainings for media and different projects such as those including safety at work.

Despite being a post conflict country and a country in transition, from its very limited resources Bosnia and Herzegovina allocates modest funds for HIV/AIDS. However, this is still insufficient in order to ensure universal access and implementation of activities in prevention and fight against this disease.

Therefore, Bosnia and Herzegovina attaches a great importance to the signing of Agreement with the Global Fund, which approved Bosnia and Herzegovina's application in 2005.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by expressing the full support of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the proposed Political Declaration and to assure you that Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a country on its way towards the European integration, is fully committed to scale up universal access to prevention, treatment, care of HIV/AIDS, as well as in fulfillment of all agreed goals.

Thank you!