



TUVALU

**Statement
by**

The Honourable LETI PELESALA

Minister of Home Affairs

at

**The High Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly
and Comprehensive Review of the Progress Achieved in
Realizing the Targets set out in the
2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS**

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Mr. President
Excellencies

It is indeed a great privilege for me to represent the Head of Government of Tuvalu to deliver this statement at this very important High-level Meeting.

Although a small independent nation in terms of population and resources, Tuvalu has also been affected by the unfortunate migration of this global epidemic – HIV/AIDS – at a proportion that puts the country high on the list of infection per capita, and at a rate that is alarming to the continued existence of our population.

The epidemic is particularly serious because of our high population mobility due to seeking overseas employment and training opportunities.

Tuvalu appreciates the assistance it has received under the Global Fund facility and much has been achieved through this support. However, it must be emphasized that accessing these funds is a problem to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) like Tuvalu, and the success of HIV/AIDS programs still needs more assistance. Moreover, the UNGA resolution 59/311 on the Mauritius Strategy on SIDS needs to be properly recognized and integrated into global efforts against HIV/AIDS. The Strategy clearly identified this particular epidemic as an area of critical concern also to the sustainable development and survival of SIDS.

A special window for SIDS like Tuvalu under the Global Fund will be useful. There is also a role for regional bodies such as those in the Pacific to play in facilitating access to the Global Fund.

Tuvalu continues to stand in strong solidarity with other regions of the world most affected by this epidemic, and in need of urgent help. The global response to HIV/AIDS must accelerate the provision of financial and technical support to governments and civil society.

Mr. President,

Since the first High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS, I am happy to report that Tuvalu has made progress in its HIV/AIDS programs. The government in partnership with NGOs and civil society has formulated its National Sustainable Development Strategy *Te Kakeega II, 2006-2015*, placing HIV/AIDS as a high strategic priority. We need help on its full implementation.

While we are indeed grateful for the assistance and support from donor countries, we appeal that global ODA partnerships targeting LDCs and other vulnerable regions, be honoured and met in full. They are crucial to the achievement of our national goals as required by the MDGs.

To conclude, we also believe that the global response and fight against HIV/AIDS is not only with money but most importantly with political will and moral values throughout the entire spectrum of civil society. It is not one between governments and organizations AND a faceless enemy. It is a battle between civil society and itself where the battle line is drawn in the mind and heart of society.

We render these thoughts in the belief that no amount of funding can resolve this particular epidemic. The solution is with us all – individuals in our various communities.

Thank you, Mr. President