



EUROPEAN UNION
DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

High Level plenary meeting and comprehensive review
of the progress achieved in realizing the targets set out in the
Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS

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Statement by
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Head of the Delegation of the European Commission

On behalf of the European Community

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Mr President of the General Assembly,
Mr Secretary-General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to take the floor in this High Level Plenary Meeting on behalf of the European Commission.

We are deeply concerned about the HIV/AIDS and its devastating impact on the life of millions of people. Despite the fact that the international community has invested a considerable amount of resources to confront HIV/AIDS, the epidemic is still not under control and the response to the disease continues to be under funded. In this regard, I would like to reiterate our strong commitment to scale up interventions and to provide the necessary support to partner countries in their efforts to achieve the goal to halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS as well as all the other Millennium Development Goals.

In order to ensure the implementation of its commitments, the European Commission continues to mobilize and allocate resources to confront HIV/AIDS. In a 4-year period (2003-2006), the European Commission has allocated through various financial instruments an overall amount of € 1,117 million (an annual average of € 280 million). This represents an almost four-fold increase from the annual average of in the previous 1994-2002 period.

The European Commission works in the area of HIV/AIDS through a wide array of instruments both at global level and country level through the provision of direct budget support to partner countries. A significant part of the EC funding is channelled through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria where the European Commission currently holds the position of the Board Vice-Chair. The European Commission together with the European Union Member States provides 65% of the total funding to the Global Fund. The European Commission alone has provided a total of € 522 million covering the period 2002-2006 which amounts to approximately 11% of total contributions.

We are particularly concerned about the fact that the epidemic is increasingly affecting young women and girls, and that this contributes directly to a major secondary impact of HIV/AIDS – the orphaning of children. We therefore believe women and children should be the focus of renewed international efforts to respond to HIV/AIDS and consider that it is necessary to concentrate on their needs when designing education and awareness raising campaigns, implementing prevention programmes and providing care and treatment. The special focus on women and children rights is set in the new European Development Policy as well as in the European Programme for Action to Confront HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis through External Action – policy documents that outline European commitments in the field of HIV/AIDS.

The European Commission works in close collaboration with a great number of stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private foundations and other civil society organizations including associations of people living with HIV. We fully support their activities

which are crucial for HIV/AIDS policy development, policy advocacy and policy implementation, as well as for the provision of social services to those affected by the disease. A close partnership between the public sector and the civil society is a necessary condition for the expansion of national responses to HIV/AIDS.

As recently stated by the President of the European Commission, “we must go further” by focusing on three crucial areas:

- affordability of new drugs, particularly through fair and tiered pricing for medicines including the newest ones – in this area, the European Commission has a wide and long experience in dealing with pharmaceutical companies;
- research on preventive technologies, in this regard the EC is ready to support industry-led research on AIDS vaccines and microbicides, with a particular focus on microbicides, where the EC has recently been very active, and
- awareness in order to stop complacency and to halt the epidemic.

Mr President of the General Assembly,
Mr Secretary-General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to conclude by reiterating our strong support to the Political Declaration, particularly the commitments related to the full implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and to the scaling up of national responses with the aim of achieving the goal of universal access to prevention, care, treatment and support by 2010.