



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**United Nations General Assembly**

**60<sup>th</sup> Session**

**HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON HIV/AIDS**

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**Statement by**  
**Ambassador Adamantios Th. Vassilakis**  
**Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations**

**NEW YORK**  
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*Check against delivery*

Mr. President,

First of all, I would like to express, on behalf of the Minister of Health and Solidarity of Greece, Mr. Dimitris Avramopoulos, his apologies for not being able to attend in person this High-Level meeting of the General Assembly on HIV-Aids, as he had planned, and to convey his best wishes for the success of this important gathering.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen:

I would like to start by restating the strong support of Greece to the UN Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and by renewing my country's commitment to reach targets and milestones necessary in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Our common challenge is unique.

The Secretary –General emphasized in his report that after a quarter of a century into the epidemic, the global AIDS response stands at a crossroads. Since 2001 countries have worked together in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Many targets have been set, many of them accomplished. Yet despite the efforts in national, European and global level, the number of new HIV/AIDS infections continues to rise. It has become evident that the AIDS pandemic has developed into a global crisis of exceptional dimensions and thus merits an exceptional response. Urgent action is needed. However, any short-term measures must fit into long term strategies.

Greece –having acknowledged HIV/AIDS infection as a priority for Public Health- has established from the very start programmes for the prevention of HIV/AIDS infection as well as for the care, treatment and support of people living with HIV/AIDS. We are committed to fight stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS.

Now we should make a step forward.

Greece is fully committed to coordinate its efforts within the European Union, the South –Eastern Europe and neighboring counties, the United Nations and other international partners. Greece supports the coordinating activities in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) and contributes to the Global Fund in the Fight against Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, as well as to the UNAIDS. The challenge we face is to implement all the targets set in the years following the Declaration of Commitment and also to find new unique pathways that will help us to tackle the disease.

This cannot be the work of one man or one nation. Strong leadership and strong partnerships are the way forward. In order to maximize our efforts we have incorporated in our new National HIV/AIDS Strategy the principles of «Three Ones»: One national framework, one national coordination body, one system of monitoring and evaluation.

The new multisectoral strategy was developed with the help of members of civil society and will be open for public consultation. The Key elements of the Greek HIV/AIDS strategy are:

1. Co-ordination and co-operation in national and international activities
2. Prevention as the cornerstone of our response
  - ▶ National campaigns for the general public through cooperation of the government, civil society and the business world utilizing the contribution of Corporate Social Responsibility. Effective prevention means that people need to be properly informed. People need the means to have safe and responsible options within the realities and circumstances of the daily lives.
  - ▶ Education is the Key for change, especially for the young who should develop the necessary life skills. This will be accomplished through development of information, educational and communicational programmes for children of school age. Updated educational material for HIV/AIDS and other STI's will be used for education in the early years of high school. Our aim is that by 2010, 95% of young people should be properly educated about HIV.
  - ▶ We give special emphasis on encouraging people to use the testing and counseling services which are available. Our aim is to increase the proportion of HIV infected people in Greece who know their HIV-status.
3. One of our main targets is to continue to provide adequate therapy for persons infected with HIV/AIDS as well as strong and effective social care services.
4. To maximize safety of blood transfusions, we implemented the use of new technologies (NAT) on single donations.
5. To increase the strategic information, in order to guide effective response, we are investing in the improvement of the surveillance system for HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections.
6. We will work towards universal access to prevention, treatment and support through partnerships with the Balkan, other neighbouring as well as African countries, using European networks such as ESTHER and other international initiatives.
7. Continuous evaluation of achievements will improve the quality of our work.

This can only be accomplished through mechanisms for overall monitoring and evaluation of the national HIV/AIDS strategy. We are working closely in achieving this aim.

Mr. President,  
Ladies and gentlemen

I can assure you of the commitment of our country to reach the targets set out in our national strategy, as well as the targets set by the Declaration for 2010

and the Millennium Developmental Goals (MDG's) for 2015. We will maximize our effectiveness by working together, enlisting the support of our political leadership, our scientists, international partners, civil society and utilizing the contribution of Corporate Social Responsibility.

It is time for action  
Thank you.