



KAZAKHSTAN

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Statement

by

H.E. Mr. A. Belonog,

**Vice-Minister of Healthcare – Chief State Health Inspector
of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan, at the high-
level plenary meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the
comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing the targets
set out in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/ AIDS**

(2 June 2006, New York)

Mr. President:

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Twenty five years ago, the first cases of HIV infection were identified. Today, AIDS is the leading cause of premature death among people aged 15 to 59, wiping out the most able-bodied and leaving behind old people and children, who cannot afford life in dignity, find a job or get even elementary education.

AIDS is the main cause of worsened economic situation and stagnated economic growth in a number of countries. This affects the life of several generations and creates a real threat to national and international security.

We have been repeatedly reminded today that, despite all the efforts of the international community and its considerable accomplishments, HIV/AIDS is still a problem that affects the development. In view of this threat, antiretroviral therapy, prevention, fighting stigma and ostracism, protection of human rights of people living with HIV remain priority items in the global agenda that demand urgent action.

Mr. President:

The epidemic continues to outpace global efforts to combat HIV/AIDS. An important goal of providing access to treatment to all people living with HIV remains, sadly, unattainable, for all practical purposes.

We believe that equal partnership between developing and developed countries, international and local non-governmental organizations, as well as the involvement of the civil society and the tertiary sector constitute key elements of the successful fight against AIDS. International cooperation in combating AIDS should be strategic and better coordinated. The "three ones" principles should form the basis of future policies and programmes pursued by governments and international organizations.

The full realization of targets set out in the Declaration of Commitment to HIV/AIDS and the attainment of the MDGs in the timeframe that has been set largely depend on strong leadership, political understanding of the problem and, last but not least, sustainable financing of HIV/AIDS programmes and projects.

Mr. President:

Recognizing serious and specific nature of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which affects not only health care systems but other spheres of life and human activities, the Government of Kazakhstan adopts a multisectoral approach to curb this epidemic. An interdepartmental commission on HIV/AIDS has been established in Kazakhstan, which also engages international and non-governmental organizations.

The country has been implementing a national programme to combat HIV/AIDS and improving the legislative framework, which is being adapted to international standards, as set out in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. Work is under way to deliver substitution therapy to drug addicts.

We believe that prevention and raising public awareness, especially of the most vulnerable groups, are key elements of the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS. Closer cooperation with non-governmental organizations in the HIV infection prevention remains a priority for the Government of Kazakhstan in this area. People living with HIV are engaged as volunteers in peer outreach targeting specific groups.

Mr. President:

Despite considerable accomplishments in fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic at the national level, the infection continues to spread in new forms. Today, HIV/AIDS tends to spread not only among injecting drug users but also among other population groups, in particular women and children. The growing incidence of sexual transmission of this virus poses a real threat to wider population groups in the country. We are facing the problem of "feminization" of HIV infections. There is a growing vertical mother-to-child HIV transmission.

Fighting stigma and discrimination, respect of human rights, provision of medical care, including treatment of AIDS-related diseases, social protection of people living with HIV and their full participation in social and productive life remain priority targets.

The effects of both legal and illegal and internal and regional migration on the rates of HIV epidemic are yet to be fully analyzed. In this context, the importance of a more effective regional cooperation in this area cannot be overemphasized.

We are interested in further meaningful cooperation with UNAIDS, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, UNFPA, UNICEF and other entities of the United Nations system and international agencies involved in the HIV/AIDS projects in Kazakhstan.

Mr. President:

The high level of this meeting and an impressive list of speakers indicate that the international community is well aware of the importance of consolidation of joint efforts to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic in an effective way. We will be in a position to reverse this pandemic only by joining our forces. The declaration to be adopted at the end of this forum should reaffirm our commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS and our determination to reach our targets.

Thank you for your attention.