



MÉXICO

Address by Dr. Julio Frenk Mora,
Secretary of Health, to the
High-level Meeting of the
General Assembly on HIV/AIDS

Item 45, Follow-up to the outcome
of the twenty-sixth special session:
implementation of the Declaration of
Commitment on HIV/AIDS

New York, June 2nd, 2006

(Check against delivery)

United Nations,
New York
2 June 2006

ADDRESS BY DR. JULIO FRENK MORA, SECRETARY OF HEALTH, TO THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO REVIEW THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN REALIZING THE TARGETS SET OUT IN THE DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT ON HIV/AIDS

The fight against HIV/AIDS is an item of critical importance on the public health, economic development and global security agenda. In this fight, Mexico has adopted a comprehensive three-pillar strategy: first, an emphasis on prevention; second, universal access to medical care for people living with HIV; and third, combating stigma and discrimination.

From the very onset of the epidemic more than two decades ago, the Mexican Government adopted evidence-and-scientific-based measures, including a ban on the commercialization of blood and the promotion of condom use. This early response was instrumental in eliminating the transmission of AIDS through blood transfusions and has significantly reduced the incidence of perinatal transmission.

Indeed, the epidemic in Mexico has been kept to one of the lowest levels in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, it is concentrated within specific population groups, where its incidence is high.

In confronting this challenge, we have intensified preventive measures targeted to young people, to men who have sex with other men, to users of injectable drugs, to men and women engaged in commercial sex, and to migrants. These actions are being carried out mainly through civil society organizations.

In the area of medical care, Mexico is undertaking a comprehensive structural reform to provide universal health coverage under a new "People's Health Insurance" scheme that covers groups excluded from the traditional social security system. Thanks to the increase in public investment in health which this reform has made possible, since 2003 Mexico has achieved universal access to comprehensive medical treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS and their families, including high-quality drugs.

The fact that the epidemic is concentrated among certain groups means that we must develop aggressive strategies to combat stigma and discrimination. In this regard, Mexico now has a new legal framework for eliminating all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on the health status or sexual orientation of individuals.

We have also carried out, with the active participation of civil society, innovative awareness-raising campaigns to prevent discrimination against persons living with HIV and to combat violence against women and homophobia.

National policies can only be effective if they are implemented within a framework of international cooperation, since we face a global threat. As a representative of Latin America on the Board of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Mexico reiterates the urgent need to provide the Fund with greater resources and to open it to a wider group of developing countries. We are also committed to strengthening the programmes of the World Health Organization and UNAIDS.

Mexico will keep its doors open to everyone, allowing free entry into and departure from our country, without discrimination of any kind, and stands ready to be a responsible actor in the global fight against HIV/AIDS.

That is why I extend a warm invitation to all of you to join us in Mexico in August 2008 at the 17th International AIDS Conference, which will be held for the first time in a Latin American country.

Thank you for your attention.