

*The Permanent Mission
of the Kingdom of Morocco
to the United Nations*



البعثة الدائمة
لمملكة المغرب لدى الأمم المتحدة

High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS

**Statement of H.E. Mr.
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Minister of Health of
The Kingdom of Morocco**

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Mr. President

Majesties, Excellencies

Mr. Secretary General

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me, at the outset, to pay tribute to all those who endeavored to translate our fight against the AIDS pandemic into a firm global commitment as well as into a collective and collaborative action under the auspices and guidance of our prestigious Organization.

I would like, in this context, to express my appreciation to the Secretary General Mr. Koffi Annan for his eminent role in mobilizing the different components of the international community in the noble, though arduous, task of fighting this devastating scourge.

I also avail myself of this opportunity to say my gratitude to President Jan Eliasson for his relentless efforts in preparing and convening this meeting which we hope will yield fruitful results.

Likewise, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the executive directors of the Global Fund against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and UNAIDS, who are both discharging their duties and tasks with abnegation and professionalism.

Lastly, I would like to say how much we are pleased with the high quality and richness of the debate during this meeting, and to extend a warm welcome to the representatives of civil society who deserve our esteem and consideration for the continuous care and services they have been providing to those infected with HIV/AIDS.

MR President

The High level of participation in this important gathering is but an indication of the interest and attention accorded to the problematic of AIDS by the international community. Likewise, it shows a deep

understanding of the risks and dangers posed by the spreading of this scourge, and a determination to contain and fight it.

The results of this conference should, therefore, be up to our expectations and our future action should reflect the strength of our commitments.

Some progress was achieved since the adoption, in 2001, of the Declaration of Commitment, mainly in what relates to the allocation of resources and to facilitating access to prevention, treatment and care. Yet the overall results fell short of expectations and did not match the objectives we had determined for this decade. The latest indicators and recent assessments prove that this pandemic is resisting all efforts to contain it and continues to spread despite the different measures and praiseworthy action undertaken.

MR President

Needless to highlight the interaction and mutual linkages between AIDS, underdevelopment and poverty, or to recall that fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis is among the eight Millennium Development Goals.

It goes without saying, also, that the fight against this scourge should be part and parcel of the fight against under-development and exclusion, and that all cooperation and partnership mechanisms for the fight against the latter should be used against the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Allocation of 0.70 percent of the GDP to Official Development Assistance, cancellation of poor countries debts, access to international markets for the products of developing countries, affordable cost for imported laboratory equipments and tri-therapy drugs, increased awareness on the part of developed countries of their responsibility towards developing ones, triangular cooperation and South-South cooperation for training and acquisition of know-how are but a few of the common measures that can contribute efficiently to the fight against AIDS.

Yet no measure would be adequate unless it is accompanied with innovative financing mechanisms which might include, among others, the conversion of the debt of countries with a high HIV prevalence into investments for the fight against AIDS. In this regard The French Initiative, supported by many countries, is appreciated.

Indeed, no region in the world is immune from the devastating impact of AIDS. Africa, and the sub-Saharan region in particular, deserve special attention for obvious reasons. This continent which has become a breeding ground for all the scourges plaguing our world, hosts 30 million HIV/AIDS infected people. More efforts are, therefore, necessary in order to provide the scientific community with adequate means for developing an anti-AIDS vaccine.

Let's draw lessons from our experience in the fight against diseases like polio and measles, which were contained and eradicated in some regions after vaccines were discovered. Let's pool our efforts for the elimination of this scourge and increase prevention measures and facilitate access to treatment for disadvantaged groups.

I would like, in this context, to pay tribute to the Forum of First Ladies in Africa which gives a high priority to the fight against AIDS and other infectious diseases.

MR. President

We have, also, launched an unprecedented awareness and information campaign in which the national media participated actively in a spirit of civism and responsibility.

We have instituted a voluntary, anonymous and free testing system, and we provide all infected persons with tri-therapy drugs free of charge. We also implement outreach programs targeting risk-behavior and vulnerable groups.

In view of the dynamics of the scourge and of the linkages between vulnerability factors and poverty, AIDS prevention has been integrated into all our development programs.

The successful implementation of the National Human Development Initiative will undoubtedly have a positive impact for the elimination of the structural factors behind vulnerability to infection.

MR. President

Morocco hosted, in Marrakech from 5 to 12 December 2005, the twelfth meeting of the Executive Board of the Global Fund against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. A Meeting of the Health Ministers in North Africa and the Middle East Region was held on this occasion to consider a collective and coordinated response to AIDS, taking into account the Moroccan plan.

MR. President

Allow me, before concluding, to underline the importance, for the international community, to continue and increase technical and financial assistance to countries with low and medium levels of HIV prevalence. The goal being to prevent spreading of the scourge in the years to come.

We need a global, concerted, integrated and urgent action in order to limit the propagation of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Thank you