

Speech

**Statement at the UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting
on AIDS**

High-Level Segment

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Mr. President. Excellencies. Distinguished Delegates. Ladies and Gentlemen. Friends.

I take the floor today to speak equally on behalf of the Executive Heads of UNAIDS' 10 Cosponsoring agencies.

Excellencies,

As we've heard this week, the results on the ground show that the 2001 Declaration of Commitment marked a true turning point in the fight against AIDS.

Because we have come so far, the stakes are even higher today – to lose momentum now, to fail now, would be unforgivable. We want an HIV-free new generation.

I understand an agreement on a draft declaration was reached this morning. I hope you can approve it, as it would take us to the next stage.

Excellencies, Friends,

We've come a long way, but there is still a long way ahead of us.

And, the way forward is clear.

We must conclude this meeting with a resolve that the fight against AIDS will get as high a priority on national and global agendas as you give to promoting economic growth or to maintaining security.

Nothing less will do because AIDS is a long-term developmental crisis – not just an immediate emergency.

We must conclude this meeting with a resolve for the 20-plus billion dollars needed annually from 2008.

Nothing less will do because every dollar of shortfall is a killing shortfall.

We must conclude this meeting with a resolve to accelerate towards universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.

Nothing less will do because only universal access can keep this epidemic from engulfing the next generations.

We must conclude this meeting with a resolve that rich and poor nations will do whatever it takes to rapidly develop microbicides, better drugs, and vaccines – as well as to ensure access to them.

Nothing less will do because we need every means to fight this epidemic.

And, Excellencies, we must conclude this meeting with a resolve to add a long-term response to the still much-needed crisis management approach.

A response that is embedded in social change, because we must address the fundamental drivers of this crisis, including the low status of women, sexual violence, homophobia, and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination.

Excellencies, Friends,

When we go back to work, we must further build the large coalition that is essential to realizing such an ambitious agenda. This meeting shows that everyone is here for just one thing – defeating AIDS – even if we may have differences on tactics, as we saw this week.

We are all a critical piece of the same strategy. Not only is there room for everybody, but also a need for everybody. The 2001 Declaration of Commitment and today's Declaration provide us with our common minimum programme for such an expanding movement against AIDS.

Let us today mark the beginning of a new era in the fight against AIDS, an era responsive to the changing world around us.

Thank you.