



PERMANENT MISSION OF TURKEY TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

BY

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**DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY OF THE
MINISTRY OF HEALTH OF TURKEY**

AT THE

**HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING 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,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

Mr. President, Turkey associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union. Therefore, I will briefly touch upon a few additional points from our national perspective.

The 2001 special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS and its outcome remains a benchmark in our efforts against the AIDS crisis. As in other parts of the world, HIV/AIDS is an unprecedented problem and poses serious challenges for Turkey.

Although being a low prevalence country Turkey, fully cognizant of its high percentage of young population as well as vulnerable people and existing stigma in our societies, has been formulating and implementing policies in order to mitigate the negative impacts of this global challenge and to scale up its efforts towards ensuring universal access to prevention and treatment. Moreover, we made sure that people living with AIDS (PLWA) have the equal rights as the other diseased people in Turkey.

Turkey, bearing in mind its MDG commitments, has already started to take important public health measures including notification and coding system of HIV/AIDS.

The National AIDS Commission which is multi-sectoral body consisted of 32 governmental and non-governmental and faith based organizations on HIV/AIDS is another milestone in fighting with HIV/AIDS. This Commission headed by the Ministry of Health meets at least twice a year to review the progress.

Our third National Strategic HIV/AIDS Action Plan which was approved by the National AIDS Commission in May 2006 constitutes another important achievement. It involves not only the main topics such as human rights, prevention, treatment and sexual and reproductive health but also care for people living with AIDS and second generation surveillance of HIV/AIDS.

I also want to mention here two very important Projects. One is "Turkey HIV/AIDS Prevention and Support Project" funded by the Global Fund and the other one is "Operations Research on Key STIs and HIV in Turkey" funded by the European Commission. These two projects will contribute significantly to reach the vulnerable populations and to make available the preventive health services to these people. Through these projects the legislative frameworks of PLWHA will be improved and VCT services will be nationwide.

In addition to its national efforts to fight against this global crisis, Turkey, within its limited resources is also committed to provide financial assistance to the most affected countries and the relevant international organizations in this field. In 2006 Turkish government decided to make voluntary contributions to the Global Fund and other UN funds dealing with HIV/AIDS.

Mr. President,

We are fully aware that important responsibility falls upon national governments. However, we strongly believe that, we must act together and increase our efforts to ensure effective cooperation as well as coordination at the global level in line with our previous commitments in order to mitigate the enormous social and economic impact of this epidemic.

In this context, we urgently address the increasing feminization aspect of this epidemic by taking necessary measures for empowerment of women and ensuring gender equality. We must ensure the involvement of all stakeholders in our national responses. We must find ways to increase sustainability of financing for scaled-up AIDS response. Turkey on its part is determined to continue to take necessary national measures and cooperate with the international community in addressing this urgent crisis.

Thank you Mr. President