



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 65TH SESSION
**HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING AND COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW
OF THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN REALIZING
THE DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT ON HIV/AIDS AND
THE POLITICAL DECLARATION ON HIV/AIDS**

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER
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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President

For over three decades the HIV/AIDS epidemic has caused immense suffering in countries and communities throughout the world and has had a devastating impact on development and human rights. 10 years after the Declaration of Commitment and 5 years after the Political Declaration, this high-level meeting emphasizes that the fight against the HIV epidemic remains one of the highest priorities of the international community. Many of the ambitious development goals we have set ourselves crucially depend on our success to combat this epidemic. Within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals and elsewhere the United Nations' campaign to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS has proven effective and can be considered as a success story of the UN system. In this regard, we particularly commend UNAIDS for its leadership role on HIV policy and coordination.

While the progress made in containing the spread of HIV/AIDS is encouraging, the epidemic continues to outpace our response. Despite notable successes in individual countries, we seriously risk failing to achieve universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support for people affected by HIV/AIDS. There are still too many barriers – national and international, legal, financial, social and cultural –, which undermine efforts to provide such universal access. Only a comprehensive strategy that addresses all aspects of this complex phenomenon will enable us to deliver on our commitments. The measures contained in the Political Declaration in this regard point to the right direction.

Mr. President

HIV/AIDS is as much a human rights imperative as it is a health and development issue. We note that several countries have positively contributed to de-stigmatizing people affected by HIV/AIDS, for example by lifting related travel and residence restrictions. At the same time, we are concerned about on-going discriminatory legal and factual situations in other countries. The criminalization of homosexuality in almost 80 countries continues to be an obstacle to effectively addressing the epidemic. The social and economic marginalization of populations at higher risk of HIV infection, such as people who use drugs, sex workers and men who have sex with men, often prevent them from fully enjoying their human rights and fundamental

freedoms, in particular the right to health. An adequate response to HIV/AIDS must fully recognize all structural determinants of HIV risks and vulnerabilities. It must address the gender dimension of the epidemic. Women are disproportionately vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and their specific situation must be taken into account. In this regard, granting universal access to sexual and reproductive health services has proven effective in preventing HIV/AIDS and contributes, in particular, to the elimination of mother-to-child transmission. While we welcome the acknowledgement in the Political Declaration of the importance to provide universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, we regret that the opportunity was missed to address the human rights dimension of this question.

Mr. President

To achieve MDG6 by 2015 remains an enormous challenge, especially so since for the first time in 10 years, the international resources needed to sustain this process did not increase. Liechtenstein continues to be committed to this goal, as we continue to support the Global Fund and other HIV/AIDS related projects with a priority on prevention and vulnerable groups, in particular children. We believe that a strong emphasis on HIV prevention is the cornerstone of an effective long-term strategy that delivers sustainable results. In order to successfully ensure prevention in both low-income and high-income countries, we need to improve knowledge about HIV/AIDS and the risk of HIV infection.

Our meeting comes at a crucial time where we can still achieve the goals that we have agreed to. The vast amount of experience and lessons learned in the fight against HIV/AIDS has allowed us to conduct a thorough review and a substantive evaluation of our endeavor to fight this epidemic. The Political Declaration that we will adopt today provides a strong foundation for a concerted, targeted and comprehensive global response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. We are confident that this high-level meeting will foster the exceptional action against HIV/AIDS that is needed to overcome the many obstacles that are still in our way.

I thank you, Mr. President.