

8 June 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the General Assembly Plenary on HIV/AIDS**

Delivered by H.E. Mrs. Lyutha Al-Mughairy, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman, on behalf of President Kutesa

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am pleased to participate in this meeting and deliver this statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, Sam Kahamba Kutesa. I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report entitled; “Future of the AIDS response: building on past achievements and accelerating progress to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030”.

This meeting comes at a critical juncture, as the international community approaches the target date for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and is now in the final stages of negotiations to define a universal, transformative and ambitious post-2015 development agenda.

The Secretary-General’s Report demonstrates that the global AIDS response has been highly successful in reversing, and in some cases even stopping, the spread of HIV/AIDS, in line with MDG Target 6 and the ambitious targets contained in the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS.

New HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths are falling globally. Risk-taking behaviour has been reduced, while access to lifesaving antiretroviral therapy has vastly improved and mother-to-child transmission rates are dropping.

Through these and other important developments, millions of lives have been saved.

Excellencies,

Despite these important accomplishments, we must not be complacent.

Worldwide, 2.1 million people became newly infected with HIV in 2013 and 1.6 million people lost their lives to the disease. Today, of the 36 million people living with HIV, 19 million do not know they are infected.

Social and economic inequality and gender-based violence continue to place women and girls at an unacceptably high risk of infection. HIV is the leading cause of death globally among women of reproductive age, and stigma and discrimination against people living with, or at higher risk of HIV infection, persist.

Given these realities, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has developed “fast track” targets to ensure that by 2020:

90% of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status;
90% of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy, and;
90% of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will achieve viral suppression.
Increased resources and investment, global solidarity, shared responsibility and an inclusive, people-centred, human rights-based and gender-sensitive approach will be necessary to achieve these objectives.

Esteemed colleagues,

As we work this year to put in place the future development agenda along with adequate means of implementation, I welcome the target to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030 within the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Progress in the AIDS response is closely intertwined with other objectives outlined across the SDGs, including targets related to health, gender equality, human rights and development as a whole.

Significant value lies in the lessons learned from the AIDS response and the UNAIDS approach for delivering a post-2015 development agenda that is truly transformative.

The AIDS response has also reaffirmed the value of partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders, the value of multi-sectoral approaches and inclusive governance to address complex challenges.

As has already been demonstrated, through collective action and adequate resourcing, much can be achieved with regard to our response to HIV and AIDS.

We should take these important lessons learned and seek to implement similar approaches across the post-2015 development agenda.

I thank you for your attention.