



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

9 April 2021

Excellency,

I have the honour to refer to the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, to be held from 8 to 10 June 2021 in the General Assembly Hall, at the United Nations Headquarters, in New York, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 75/260 entitled “Organization of the 2021 high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS”.

The General Assembly, in its resolution 75/260, invited Member States and observers to the Assembly to participate and be represented at the highest level at the high-level meeting.

In this same resolution, the General Assembly requested the President of the General Assembly, with support from UNAIDS and in consultation with Member States, to finalize the organizational arrangements for the high-level meeting and for the interactive multi-stakeholder hearing. The resolution further requests the identification of a person living with HIV and an eminent person engaged in the response to HIV/AIDS to speak at the opening plenary meeting, and the identification of themes and finalization of the panel discussions.

In the same resolution, the General Assembly also requested for timely, open, transparent and inclusive consultations with all Member States, with a view to adopting a concise and action-oriented declaration as an outcome of the high-level meeting, to be agreed upon by Member States.

In this regard, and further to my letter of 11 November 2020, I have the honour to inform you that H.E. Mr. Mitchell Peter Fifield, Permanent Representative of Australia, and H.E. Mr. Neville Melvin Gertze, Permanent Representative of Namibia, will continue to serve as the co-facilitators for the preparations of the high-level meeting, including the declaration. I wish to thank them for their willingness to continue to undertake this important responsibility, and trust that your full cooperation and support will continue to be extended to them. The Co-Facilitators will reach out to Member States through regional groups to begin the process of consultations for the declaration.

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

Regarding practical arrangements for participation, as well as the format of the high-level meeting on the basis of an assessment of the COVID-19-related health conditions, I intend to circulate a draft decision on pre-recorded statements from high-level speakers during the formal part of the high-level meeting, for subsequent adoption by the General Assembly at a plenary meeting in April 2021.

Furthermore, pursuant to operative paragraph 8 of resolution 75/260, I will organize and preside over an **informal interactive multi-stakeholder hearing**, as part of the preparatory process for the high-level meeting. The hearing will be hosted on the remote simultaneous interpretation platform Interpretify on Friday, 23 April 2021, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. and will be webcast live and on demand on United Nations Web TV. The concept note and provisional programme of the meeting are hereby attached. I look forward to your active participation in the hearing.

I have further the honour to invite you to attend a **virtual informal briefing on preparations for the high-level meeting** to be convened for all Member States and Observers on Monday, 12 April, at 11:30 a.m. The informal briefing will be held without interpretation on CiscoWebEx and I will be represented by my Chef de Cabinet, Ms. Tegan Brink. I am pleased to inform you that the Co-Facilitators, Ambassador Fifield and Ambassador Gertze, and the Executive Director of UNAIDS, Ms. Winnie Byanyima, will join the briefing, which will provide an opportunity to share more details and exchange initial views on the preparations for the high-level meeting. Information on how to connect to the WebEx-platform will be provided in due course.

For further information, please contact Mr. Robin Peeters, Advisor for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs (robin.peeters@un.org) and Mr. Ahmad Almaududy, Advisor on UN Reform, Budget and Legal Affairs (ahmad.amri@un.org), copying Ms. Hila Wesa, Team Leader for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs (wesa@un.org).

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Volkan BOZKIR

Concept Note

Interactive Multi-Stakeholder Hearing as part of the preparatory process for the 2021 High-level meeting on HIV/AIDS

Friday, 23 April 2021

Background

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 75/260, a high-level meeting (HLM) on HIV/AIDS will be convened from 8 to 10 June 2021, in the General Assembly Hall, at the UN Headquarters, in New York. The HLM will undertake a comprehensive review of the progress on the commitments made in the 2016 Political Declaration towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030, and how the response, in its social, economic and political dimensions, continues to contribute to progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the global health goal. The high-level meeting will provide recommendations to guide and monitor the HIV/AIDS response beyond 2021, including new concrete commitments to accelerate action to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as well as to promote the renewed commitment and engagement of leaders, countries, communities and partners to accelerate and implement a comprehensive universal and integrated response to HIV/AIDS.

The General Assembly requested the President of the General Assembly to organize and preside over an interactive multi-stakeholder hearing as part of the preparatory process for the HLM, with support from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, and with the participation of people living with, at risk of and affected by HIV, including key populations, representatives of Member States and observers of the General Assembly, parliamentarians, representatives of local governments, invited civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, philanthropic foundations, academia, medical associations, the private sector and broader communities. The hearing will be hosted on the remote simultaneous interpretation platform *Interprefy* on 23 April 2021 and will be webcast live and on demand on United Nations Web TV.

Objective

The interactive multi-stakeholder hearing will provide all relevant stakeholders with an opportunity to contribute to the ongoing HLM preparations through interactive panel discussions. The hearing aims to support Member States with the preparatory process, including to inform the negotiations of the HLM declaration, through an interactive dialogue with communities, civil society and other key stakeholders. During the panel discussions, civil society representatives and other stakeholders are expected to share their views and experiences from their work on the ground.

The hearing aims to demonstrate the strength, diversity and commitment of communities, civil society and other stakeholders in the response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and to propose transformative actions that will make it possible to upend intersecting inequalities that are preventing progress to achieving zero new HIV infections, zero AIDS-related deaths and zero discrimination, and ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. More specifically:

- Panelists will share their views and reflections on the progress and challenges since the 2016 Political Declaration and will be encouraged to exchange views on successes on the ground, best practices, lessons learned, obstacles and gaps, challenges and opportunities, as identified by civil society organizations and other stakeholders working in the field.

- Panelists will discuss their key priorities for the high-level meeting, while generating shared understanding of epidemic priorities, opportunities and challenges of the new global context, including addressing entrenched inequalities, coinfections, and the intersection of HIV and other existing and new epidemics including COVID-19, affecting hardest the communities most at risk of HIV/AIDS, especially specific and more vulnerable groups within those communities.

Guiding questions for the hearing

1. What achievements in addressing challenges identified in the 2016 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS should be expanded and built upon?
2. What critical areas of the HIV/AIDS response are lagging behind and need greater attention? To what extent have community-led interventions been prioritized in response to the 2016 Political Declaration? Which communities, regions and countries are being left behind and why?
3. In order to reach the 2025 targets, what should be the strategic priorities in the response? What will need to change in support of those priorities? What are the “gamechangers” and transformative actions that will make it possible to upend inequalities and protect communities against health emergencies and pandemics, including COVID-19?
4. How do we ensure the continuity of HIV programs in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and better pandemic preparedness, to keep people living with HIV and affected by HIV safe from COVID-19 and other imminent threats, including ensuring their inclusion among priority population groups for COVID-19 prevention, tests, evidence-based treatments and vaccines?
5. How can stakeholders collaborate to overcome prejudice, stigma, discrimination, human rights and gender equality barriers that slow progress in the HIV response and leave key populations behind?
6. How do we mobilize strong political leadership and strengthen partnerships between government, civil society, community-led networks and organizations, and other stakeholders in the AIDS response for a renewed sense of urgency and optimal efficiency?
7. How do we achieve the financing necessary to fully fund and sustain the HIV/AIDS response, including prioritizing and supporting community-, key population-, women-, young people and adolescents in all their diversity-led interventions? What support do countries and communities need to develop, resource and implement people-centered strategies and plans, including in advancing HIV/AIDS integration into health systems strengthening and universal health coverage efforts?

Format

The hearing will be hosted on the remote simultaneous interpretation platform *Interprefy* on Friday, 23 April 2021, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. and will be webcast live and on demand on United Nations Web TV. It will be divided into an opening segment, four interactive panel discussions and a closing segment.

The four moderated panels will feature four speakers each (3 minutes interventions), representing diverse geographical, gender, identity and community realities, and both people living with and affected by HIV. The provisional themes for the panels are:

- 1) Equitable and equal access to HIV prevention, treatment and services
- 2) Structural and social barriers to achieving HIV outcomes (zero new HIV infections, zero AIDS-related deaths, and zero discrimination)
- 3) Fully resource and sustain efficient HIV responses and integrate into systems for health, development, social protection, humanitarian settings and pandemic responses
- 4) Bringing it together: building synergies and addressing critical gaps

Further information on the composition of the panels will be provided in due course.

Outcome

The outcome will be a summary by the President of General Assembly which will be circulated to all Member States and other stakeholders and posted on the PGA's website (<https://www.un.org/pga/75>) prior to the high-level meeting in June 2021.

Interactive Multi-Stakeholder Hearing
as part of the preparatory process for the 2021 High-level meeting on HIV/AIDS

Provisional Programme
Friday, 23 April 2021

09:00-09:30	<p><u>Opening segment</u></p> <p>Statements by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the General Assembly during the seventy-fifth session ● H.E. Mr. Neville Gertze, Permanent Representative of Namibia to the UN, Co-facilitator on the preparations for the 2021 High- Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS ● Ms. Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director, UNAIDS ● Person openly living with HIV
09:30-10:45	<p><u>Panel 1: Equitable and equal access to HIV prevention, treatment and services</u></p> <p><i>This panel will address HIV prevention for key populations, youth and AGYW in all their diversity; testing; treatment and care with focus on adolescents, youth and adults living with HIV, especially key populations and other priority populations; vertical transmission and pediatric service delivery for children living with HIV; quality of life and well-being, including mental health; integration of services including SRHR, TB and viral hepatitis.</i></p>
10:45-12:00	<p><u>Panel 2: Structural and social barriers to achieving HIV outcomes (zero new HIV infections, zero AIDS-related deaths, and zero discrimination)</u></p> <p><i>This panel will address scaling up community-led prevention, testing and treatment; addressing social enablers; youth empowerment; repealing punitive laws and policies; addressing gender inequality and ending gender-based violence (including forced sterilization) and violence towards key populations; ending stigma and discrimination; addressing disability and migration; strengthening safety and security, including privacy and data security of people living with HIV and key populations.</i></p>
15:00-16:15	<p><u>Panel 3: Fully resource and sustain efficient HIV responses and integrate into systems for health, development, social protection, humanitarian settings and pandemic responses</u></p> <p><i>This panel will address the global funding need; community and health systems strengthening; HIV sensitive universal health coverage and social protection; mitigating the impact of COVID-19 including access to vaccines for people living with HIV and key populations; humanitarian settings; access to medicines and intellectual property and; advocacy and accountability.</i></p>

16:15-17:30	<p><u>Panel 4: Bringing it together: building synergies and addressing critical gaps</u></p> <p><i>This panel will address the Global AIDS Strategy 2021-2026 cross-cutting, with a focus on political leadership, partnerships, advocacy, community ownership, monitoring and accountability.</i></p>
17:30-18:00	<p><u>Closing segment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● H.E. Mr. Mitchell Fifield, Permanent Representative of Australia to the UN, Co-facilitator for the preparations of the High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS● Person openly living with HIV● H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the General Assembly during the seventy-fifth session