



**PERMANENT MISSION OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**
771 UNITED NATIONS PLAZA, NEW YORK, NY 10017

**STATEMENT BY
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**AT THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING AND
COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS
ACHIEVED IN REALIZING THE TARGETS SET
OUT IN THE DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT ON
HIV/AIDS**

**2 June 2006
New York**

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Mr. President, Secretary-General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Brunei Darussalam very much welcomes the convening of this High Level Meeting. These last few days had already provided valuable insights in evaluating progress and reassessing our efforts in combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

There had been some important progress made since the last session. The Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted in June 2001 was a demonstration of our strong resolve to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Just last year during the Millennium Review Summit, our leaders committed to put in more effort in addressing the issue. However, as we can see from the Secretary-General's reports, and during the interactive sessions we've had in the last few days, it is clear that more needs to be done.

Brunei Darussalam fully supports the strategic framework to reach the "3 by 5" initiative launched by WHO and UNAIDS on World AIDS Day 2003 for effective prevention, treatment and support services collaboration and harmonious integration for HIV/AIDS programmes.

The signing of the 7th ASEAN Summit Declaration on HIV/AIDS during the 7th ASEAN Summit in 2001 held in Brunei Darussalam further reflects the country's commitment towards fighting the epidemic, pledging HIV/AIDS as a high national and regional priority with consequences encompassing not just health but social, political and economic issues.

Further, Brunei Darussalam is fully committed towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals where the health sector's role is recognized in all, in particular Goal 6 which is combating HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.

Despite the commendable achievements we have attained since 2001, the Secretary General reported during the Fifty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2003 that the international community had failed to reach several of the Declaration's objectives set for 2003. This was again highlighted by the Secretary-General in his Report to the UN General Assembly High Level Meeting on AIDS on the Opening Day.

It appears that prevention strategies have not been fully focused on the efforts to tackle this epidemic. This has resulted in infection rates being on the increase with over 4.9 million new infections in 2005 alone. Successful prevention together with effective treatment is the solution to the problem of HIV/AIDS. People's awareness on HIV as well as knowing their status is a powerful driving force in changing behaviour; it would also indirectly reduce stigma, create more openness on HIV/AIDS and willingness of people to come forward for testing and counseling. We therefore strongly support the Secretary-General's call for a renewed emphasis on HIV prevention.

Brunei Darussalam is also pleased to note that a plan has been launched on January 2004 to expand collaboration between national tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS programmes to curb the growing epidemic of TB/HIV co-infection. TB and HIV/AIDS together presents a massive challenge. TB/HIV collaboration can deliver an effective, comprehensive care and prevention at the community level and help in reaching the "3 by 5" target. However, we all need to act on it.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is most heartrending to hear the real-life experiences of persons living with HIV/AIDS recounting the physical, emotional and social trauma that they have been through, the ups and downs as well as the fight, triumph and success against HIV/AIDS. We are confident that the approach in giving an opportunity for civil society hearing will bring up a lot of issues, be it positive or negative, that needs to be learnt and addressed.

Asia has been identified to be one of the regions to have high concentration of HIV/AIDS infection. Brunei Darussalam is categorized as a low prevalent country for HIV/AIDS since the onset of the epidemic. We believe socio and religious factors contribute to these low numbers. The Government has also been playing an active and leading role. We have adopted the principle of ensuring universal and equitable access for better and comprehensive health care services – this is reflected by provision of free treatment and counseling for citizens of Brunei Darussalam and permanent residents who suffer the disease.

Brunei Darussalam places high importance in ensuring public participation and public-private partnership with various non-governmental organizations is also a feature in the implementation of our various health programmes including HIV/AIDS. This is well exemplified by the HIV/AIDS outreach programme (HOPE) set up by the Standard Chartered Bank with the collaboration of Brunei Darussalam AIDS Council, a NGO, to increase the level of awareness through educational programmes targeting youth, women and the general public.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We can see there is growing political will globally with an increase in new financial resources to support the global response as well as knowledge to combat the epidemic. Further, the pharmaceutical industry has lowered the price of antiretroviral drugs for low-income countries. However, it is sad to note that despite all these commitments, inequalities in financial distribution as well as access to prevention, care, support and treatment still persist globally with the majority of people with HIV/AIDS is in developing countries. Most are deprived of not only antiretroviral therapy but also to simple medications to treat opportunistic infections and alleviate pain. Thus, the next step will be translating this political and financial will and commitments into meaningful and effective actions.

Prevention, care, treatment and support can and must be made available to all who need them and is achievable to all who needs it only if all countries, regions and organizations give their full support to the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. Obstacles and barriers to the success of these programmes must be torn down in order for us to move forward and achieve our targets.

As the saying goes "Prevention is better than cure"; however, in our efforts to fight the epidemic effectively, prevention, treatment, care and support programmes must go hand in hand and be implemented together. The pivotal role played by regional and international cooperation which had led to the achievement thus far, needs to be further enhanced. Lessons learnt and experiences also need to be shared to enrich each other's efforts.

Thank you