

ITEM 41:
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT ON HIV/AIDS
AND THE POLITICAL DECLARATION ON HIV/AIDS

STATEMENT

BY

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report, which provides a useful update on developments in the global response to HIV/AIDS. One year after the General Assembly's high-level meeting on progress achieved in realizing the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, the fight against the HIV epidemic remains one of the highest priorities of the international community. For more than 25 years, HIV/AIDS has caused immense suffering in countries and communities throughout the world and has had devastating consequences on development and human rights. The Declaration of Commitment is our foremost tool to combat the scourge of HIV/AIDS, both nationally and in our multilateral efforts. Indeed, the fight against HIV/AIDS is one of the areas where UN action has proven most effective and indispensable. Our success will have a strong impact on our progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, in particular MDG 6.

Nine years after the adoption of the Declaration, its comprehensive approach is more relevant than ever. We recognized at the time that HIV/AIDS is a complex phenomenon and that we need to address all its aspects in order to be successful. Much of the progress that has been made in recent years has come about through relevant health and development policies and improved funding for universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. That progress, however, and the lack thereof in specific areas, has let us realize even more that the fight against HIV/AIDS is as much a human rights imperative as it is a health and development issue. Direct and indirect discrimination against people living with HIV and populations most vulnerable to infection pose serious challenges to the implementation of the Declaration and the achievement of MDG 6. We share the Secretary-General's concern about HIV-related travel restrictions, overly broad criminalization of HIV transmission and discriminatory laws impeding access to health services by high-risk groups. The response to HIV/AIDS will not be effective without a full understanding of the social and structural determinants of HIV risk and vulnerability. As a consequence, we must fully address the human rights

dimension of the epidemic, including gender inequalities, social marginalization, stigma and discrimination.

Mr. President

While the international community has devoted almost unprecedented financial means to the fight against HIV/AIDS, the goal of halting and reversing its spread by 2015 remains an enormous challenge. The rate of progress in expanding access to essential services still does not keep pace with the expansion of the HIV itself. We must therefore not relent in our efforts and place even stronger emphasis on the area of prevention. In order to successfully ensure prevention in both low-income and high-income countries we need to improve the knowledge about HIV/AIDS and the risk of infection. HIV prevention is the cornerstone of our long-term success. Its effectiveness could greatly improve through an integrated approach with existing programmes regarding tuberculosis, maternal and child health, as well as sexual and reproductive health.

Mr. President

The financial and economic crisis poses an additional threat to the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment and to the goal of achieving, by 2010, universal access to HIV/AIDS treatment for all those who need it.¹ Liechtenstein remains committed to this goal. We agree with the Secretary General's statement that the HIV response represents a sound global investment. Liechtenstein has therefore continued to increase the resources invested for this purpose, both domestically and at the international level. Our contribution to the fight against HIV/AIDS at the global level even surpasses our contribution to the regular UN budget. Within the UN family, we are currently contributing to programs run by UNICEF and UNAIDS, in addition to our participation in the financing of the Global Fund. We are committed to continuing our financial contribution in the future, and hope that other States will uphold and further expand their commitments as well.

I thank you.

¹ MDG 6, Target 6 B.