



**PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
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GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 70TH SESSION  
**HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON ENDING AIDS BY 2030**

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President

This high-level meeting on ending AIDS offers us a unique opportunity: To come together and resolve to eradicate the AIDS epidemic by 2030. In doing so, we would illustrate once again the UN's ability to and indeed its unique role in addressing global health crises. Under the leadership of UNAIDS, the organization has already played a central role in addressing an epidemic that has seemed an almost insurmountable threat in the lifespan of many of us. For decades, the scourge of the AIDS epidemic has caused immense suffering and devastation – over 34 million people have died from AIDS, more than 14 million children have been orphaned and, each day, over 6,000 men, women and children continue to be infected with HIV. Eradicating AIDS would be a triumph of multilateralism based on science. And it would also be the strongest possible expression of how dedicated we are to the most far-reaching commitment we have collectively subscribed to: In the 2030 Agenda, with its strong pledge to leave no one behind, we have already committed ourselves to the eradication of AIDS in the next fifteen years. In agreeing to the measures needed to eradicate AIDS by 2030, we are also sending a clear signal on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Our success in achieving the 2030 Agenda as a whole indeed depends on our success in combating AIDS, one of the biggest obstacles to sustainable development.

Mr. President

15 years ago, we came together and agreed on the Declaration of Commitment. The threat posed by the AIDS epidemic was significantly different at the time – so we can rightfully claim that we got many things right in 2001. Over 8 million AIDS-related deaths and 30 million new HIV infections have been averted since. We have witnessed a 58% reduction in the number of children newly infected with HIV, and over 42% of people currently living with HIV have access to antiretroviral treatment. Harm reduction programs, including the availability of opioid substitution therapy as well as needle and syringe programs, have been significantly expanded. Overall, the gains in treatment have resulted in a 26% decline in AIDS-related deaths in the last five years. These numbers allow for just one, unequivocal conclusion: we have learned in the past 15 years what works – and what does not. The recipe for success is therefore an evidence-

and science-based approach. The lessons we have learned are key to shaping our future response – which is what we are agreeing on at this high-level meeting today.

Mr. President

This is not a moment to be complacent. While we have achieved much progress, the epidemic continues to outpace our response. In other words, if we do not step up the global AIDS response now, we will fail to achieve what is within reach: the eradication of AIDS by 2030. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's fast-track approach in order to reach the 90-90-90 testing and treatment target within the next five years. There is a real risk in some places – including in our part of the world – of a misperception that HIV/AIDS is a threat we have already overcome. This can lead to setbacks instead of the decisive progress that is possible. One lesson from the past 15 years is that fully taking into account the human rights dimension of our discussion is a key ingredient of success. Stigma and discrimination continue to pose a serious threat to the full enjoyment of human rights for people living with HIV/AIDS. And almost more importantly, such stigmatization has proven to be an obstacle to an effective response to address the epidemic. Our global response must therefore address the needs, vulnerabilities and rights of those who are at particular risk of HIV infection: People who inject drugs as well as men who have sex with men are both 24 times more likely to be infected with HIV than adults in the general population. The removal of discriminatory and punitive laws that block access to HIV services for key populations and others is not just fundamental to the protection of human rights, but also to the effectiveness of the global AIDS response. We therefore welcome the strong rights-based approach of the Political Declaration as a whole. But we also would have liked to see a clear statement that ending AIDS is only possible if we end the marginalization and even criminalization of certain groups. Given this reality, we regret that not more emphasis was put on removing discriminatory and punitive laws.

Mr. President

It is paramount that the AIDS response focuses on the needs of those who remain most affected by the epidemic: women and girls. While the number of women and girls of reproductive age dying from AIDS-related causes has declined by 35% globally in the last five

years, AIDS remains one of the leading causes of death among women and adolescent girls of reproductive age. Gender-based violence, harmful gender norms and unequal power relations in particular are factors that make women and girls disproportionately vulnerable to the epidemic. The empowerment of all women and girls and the eradication of AIDS are therefore inextricably linked. Comprehensive sexuality education and access to combination prevention services are key elements of such empowerment. We therefore welcome the gender-responsive approach of the Political Declaration, particularly in recognizing the right of all women to have control over and to decide freely on matters related to their sexuality, including their sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. But we also regret the omission of comprehensive sexuality education as well as sexual and reproductive health and rights from the outcome document.

Mr. President

The window of opportunity to radically change the trajectory of the AIDS epidemic is narrow. In the past fifteen years, we have been able to gather a wealth of experience in the fight against HIV/AIDS. It is now in our hands to fulfill our pledge to leave no one behind and to apply our proven tools adequately and equitably. Let us use the political momentum we generated by the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and ensure a global AIDS response that will promote the quality of life, the human rights and the dignity of all people living with, at risk of and affected by HIV/AIDS.

I thank you.