

ITEM 44:
**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT ON HIV/AIDS AND
THE POLITICAL DECLARATION ON HIV/AIDS**

STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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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, especially in view of the upcoming MDG summit. The fight against the HIV epidemic remains one of the highest priorities of the international community; a priority that Liechtenstein fully shares. HIV/AIDS continues to cause immense suffering throughout the world, and has devastating consequences on development and human rights. We agree that the HIV/AIDS epidemic is a cross-cutting issue. Meaningful progress here will not only allow us to achieve Millennium Development Goal 6, but all the MDGs.

Mr. President,

We must recognize that tremendous progress has been made in the fight against this epidemic. The number of new HIV infections, for example, was 30% lower in 2008 than at the high-water mark in 1996. Nevertheless, we are currently not on track to meet the goal of reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015, and, despite notable successes by individual countries, we risk to fail in achieving our undertaking to universalize access to HIV/AIDS treatment by 2010. In order to deliver on our commitment, we must recognize the gender dimension of the issue. Women are disproportionately vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and their specific situation must be addressed. The provision of universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, for example, has been proven to contribute to HIV prevention, and, in particular, to the elimination of mother-to-child transmission. Addressing the broader issue of gender inequality in societies ensures that HIV/AIDS programs are targeted at the specific needs of women, such as preventing unintended pregnancies, strengthening antenatal care and expanding services for female sex workers.

We agree with the Secretary-General that our efforts to achieve the MDGs must be guided by the norms and values embedded in the Millennium Declaration and

international human rights instruments, in particular the key human rights principles of non-discrimination, meaningful participation and accountability. The fight against HIV/AIDS is as much a human rights imperative as it is a health and development issue. We note that several countries have positively contributed to de-stigmatizing HIV/AIDS and those most at risk for HIV infection by lifting related travel restrictions and decriminalizing homosexuality. At the same time, we are concerned about developments in both the legal and factual situation in some states, relating, for example, to injecting drug users, sex workers and especially men who have sex with men. We share the Secretary-General's concern about the overly broad criminalization of HIV transmission, the withholding of HIV prevention and treatment for the most-at-risk-population, and other discriminatory measures. A full and effective response to HIV/AIDS requires that we address the human-rights dimension of the epidemic, including gender inequalities, social marginalization, stigma and discrimination, for example through the meaningful involvement of people living with HIV in prevention programs.

Mr. President,

The Secretary-General is quite right: "business as usual" is unacceptable. We have less than five years in which to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and only months in which to make one final push to deliver on the promise made in the Declaration of Commitment to provide, by the end of this year, universal access to HIV/AIDS treatment. Now is the time for concrete action. In 2009, Liechtenstein's contribution to global efforts to staunch the HIV/AIDS epidemic again exceeded its contribution to the UN's regular budget. We contribute to the Global Fund and UNAIDS as well as to UNICEF projects focused on HIV/AIDS. At this critical juncture, we call on all states to renew their efforts to tackle the HIV/AIDS epidemic and thereby send the message that the world stands by its commitments to achieve the MDGs by 2015.

I thank you.