



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

828 SECOND AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017 • TEL. (212) 953-9130 • FAX (212) 697-1970

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# STATEMENT

by

**President Olusegun Obasanjo**

at the

*High-Level Plenary Meetings on the follow-up to the  
outcome on the Twenty-Sixth Special Session and the  
Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment  
on HIV/AIDS*

New York, September 22, 2003



**Mr President,**

**I would like to thank the Secretary General for convening this High-Level Plenary Session on HIV/AIDS and to reaffirm Nigeria's commitment to the full implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and its follow-up provisions. In line with the Declaration, my Government has adopted far-reaching measures to combat the pandemic at all levels. We are undertaking nationwide advocacy, public enlightenment campaign and mass mobilization aimed at deepening awareness and understanding of the disease, the prevention and control of its spread and modalities for providing care and support for its victims. To this end, my Government has established a National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA).**



**Mr President,**

I should recall that in December 2002, in Abuja, I presided over a huge public rally to commemorate the International Aids Day. The theme of the occasion was: the fight against stigmatisation, discrimination and the violation of human rights of those living with HIV/AIDS. We are now in the process of enacting legislation to make the stigmatisation and discrimination against victims of the disease an offence punishable in Law. The Legislation will also ensure that the victims of the disease can enjoy access to social services and employment on non-discriminatory basis. In addition, we are addressing the plights of children orphaned by the disease.

**Mr President,**

As a concrete manifestation of our commitment to the global fight against the disease, we have redeemed



our pledge of US\$10 million to the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. While commending countries, Organisations and Foundations for their contributions to the Fund, we urge those who are yet to redeem their pledges to do so accordingly.

In conclusion, Mr President, there is an urgent need to intensify purposeful and coherent global policies and functional partnerships in the fight against the disease. Among the issues that need to be addressed internationally are: the problems of inadequate resources; the dearth of technical capacity in developing countries and the high cost of antiretroviral drugs for HIV/AIDS victims. In this regard, research priorities must be adequately designed to take into account the health needs of developing countries. Additional resources must also be made available for research in the development of vaccine against the virus.

I thank you, Mr President.