



Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations

**Mr. President,**

I have the pleasure to read the statement of H.E. Mrs. Soraya Dalil, Acting Minister of Public Health of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, who was not able to attend the High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS.

And I quote:

**Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

“I would first like to convey the warm greetings of the people and Government of Afghanistan.

It is an honor to take part in this historic gathering, which brings together a broad and diverse group of relevant stakeholders, including member-states and civil society, to take stock of both progress and challenges of the past thirty years in addressing the HIV/AIDS. The past decade has witnessed a more concerted international approach to protect our societies from the scourge of HIV/AIDS. These were facilitated by the 2001 UN Special Session on HIV/AIDS, and the Political Declaration of 2006, by which member-states committed to undertake important measures towards universal access to HIV protection, treatment, care and support.

I would like to seize this opportunity to reiterate Afghanistan’s full commitment in the global fight against HIV/AIDS. We are working closely with our development partners to strengthen national efforts for an effective response to HIV/AIDS. We have initiated a number of important measures at the national level in this regard. These efforts continue within the framework of activities of the Ministry of Public Health, civil-society, and other segments of society.

We have aligned HIV/AIDS response efforts with our Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), both of which are being pursued as a matter of high priority.

Despite the current security constraints in Afghanistan, the Ministry of Public Health has managed to provide HIV/AIDS services covering prevention, treatment, and care even in the most insecure and remote provinces. The implementation of Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) services as part of the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) across the country has successfully increased the provision of HIV testing as well as provided a key entry point to life-sustaining care and treatment, essential for the prevention of vertical transmission of HIV.

While poverty is a critical underlying driver of the epidemic in Afghanistan, the Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan aims to alleviate any social or economic barriers to accessing health services by providing care free of cost in order to improve the health of all Afghans. This is especially true of the HIV response through which the Government in partnership with civil society reaches out to the most vulnerable sections of our society; drug users, prisoners and sex workers. Furthermore, as stigma and discrimination are continuing obstacles to accessing prevention and care services, the Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan has stepped up efforts to decrease stigma and discrimination by continuous information, education and communication campaigns.

Our programme and priorities are encapsulated in the national HIV/AIDS policy and the new HIV/AIDS Strategy (2011-15) which serves as the guide to achieving zero new infections, zero stigma and zero AIDS related death in Afghanistan.

I look forward to further collaboration and partnership with the United Nations and member states in order to move the AIDS agenda forward in Afghanistan and globally.

**Mr. President,**

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate Afghanistan's firm commitment in its national response to address HIV/AIDS in an effective and sustainable manner. We look forward to continued collaboration with all relevant international partners in attaining our common goals and objectives."

End of Quote.

I thank you Mr. President.