



# ARMENIA

**9 June 2011**

**High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS**

**Statement by Mr. Sergey Khachatryan,  
Deputy Minister of Health of the Republic of Armenia**

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The commitments undertaken by the Government of Armenia have radically changed the conceptual approaches towards HIV prevention since Armenia's joining of the Declaration of Commitment of 2001 and Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS of 2006.

In this context, Armenia has instituted a number of changes and programs in its approach towards HIV/AIDS prevention and education. Starting from 2010, "Healthy Life Style" training course with the HIV education component has been introduced in the curricula of secondary and senior schools and is taught as a separate subject. One of the main aims of this project is to promote HIV knowledge among youth and reach the ambitious target on HIV knowledge as set by the Declaration of Commitment.

In addition, risk- and harm-reduction programmes and behaviour change and information education communication strategies are being implemented among the most-at-risk populations and youth, which have resulted in stabilization of the HIV epidemic among the key vulnerable population through raising their HIV awareness, making their behaviour safer and expanding access to prevention means and information.

The HIV epidemic in Armenia remains in concentrated state. It is worth mentioning, however, that Armenia is located in one of the regions of the world where the HIV incidence rate tends to increase as a result of labour migratory trends in the area.

The significant number of HIV infection cases registered in our country is connected with the migration processes. More than a half of the registered HIV cases in the country are labour migrants who were infected through heterosexual contacts outside Armenia. The migration restrictions in host countries related to HIV, limited access to healthcare services, HIV prevention measures and information directly influence the healthcare sector of Armenia.

Speaking of trends, it is also worth noting that, starting from 2006, the major mode of HIV transmission in Armenia has changed from injecting drug use to heterosexual transmission. This is associated with the overall trends of the HIV epidemic in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

An increase in the number of registered HIV cases has been observed in the recent years in the country, which is associated with scaling up laboratory diagnostics capacities, increasing accessibility to HIV testing as well as upgrading the counselling, testing and referral systems. As a result, the number of performed HIV tests has been increased and HIV detectability has been improved significantly.

In this context, the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has been providing unique support to the National AIDS Programme since 2004. As a result, significant national capacity was built, strong national response was formed, ARV treatment and PMTCT (prevention of mother to child HIV transmission) became available for all those in need. Currently, all pregnant women diagnosed with HIV are provided with prevention of mother to child HIV transmission services. The rate of pregnant women who received HIV counseling and testing services is more than 95%. Further scaling up of those services will hopefully lead us to reach our common ultimate goal: the elimination of mother-to-child HIV transmission.

As we try to find the cure for this terrible disease, it is important that we make the lives of those that are infected as comfortable and humane as possible. We should work together to ensure the removal of over-restrictive legal and regulatory barriers that prevent access to controlled medications for all those that need them for pain treatment.

Mr. President,

By joining the Millennium Declaration, Armenia committed itself to incorporating the Millennium Development Goals into the national long-term policies and plans and introducing sustainable strategies and programs for integrating economic growth and human development. Through broad consultations, Armenia has adopted the MDGs and developed a national MDG framework incorporating nationalized targets and indicators for 2015. The implementation of the National AIDS Programme will be a big contributing factor towards the achievement of the MDG goals in Armenia by such date.

We are hopeful that institutions such as the Global Fund, UN agencies, multi-lateral and other technical partners will continue to play an active role in the support of the National AIDS Programme realization, without whose help it would be extremely difficult to achieve the universal access targets and the MDG HIV targets in Armenia. Global solidarity is going to be the key if we are to succeed in our fight against this disease.

Lastly, I would like to express our confidence that this High-Level Meeting on AIDS will establish the road map for achieving universal access to quality, affordable primary health care, holistic comprehensive care and support services for people living with and affected by HIV, including physical, spiritual, psycho-social, socio-economic, legal, nutritional and palliative care services.

Thank you for your attention.