



*STATEMENT BY*  
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*HIGH LEVEL MEETING OF VIH/SIDA*

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Mr. President,

The Dominican Republic reaffirms the commitments stated in the *Declaration of Commitment in the Fight against HIV/AIDS* of 2001 and the *Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS* of 2006, respectively; **recognizes the relevance of the adoption of the *Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS* in the framework of the present High Level Meeting**, and places HIV and AIDS as an issue of utmost importance in the national Agenda, that partakes in the efforts aimed to alleviate poverty and to promote the country's social and economic development.

Under the guiding principles of the United Nations, the Dominican Republic mobilizes its resources to examine the situation regarding HIV and AIDS and to build a coordinated, solid and comprehensive National Response in all areas, complying with the fundamental principles of the "Three Ones" of the United Nations Joint Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and having as a goal the achievement of Goal Number 6, Target 7 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to which our country is deeply committed.

Mr. President,

As the Caribbean region constitutes the second area in the world most affected by HIV/AIDS, including the island of Hispaniola, which has an incidence of approximately 80% of the HIV/AIDS cases that are registered in the Caribbean, it is extremely important to increase national and international efforts in order to establish effective mechanisms that contribute to the decrease of the spread of the epidemic. Special attention must be given to the general population, without exclusion of vulnerable groups, such as sex workers, intravenous drug users, inhabitants of sugar cane fields, among others, noting that in our country the highest levels of the epidemic are concentrated in these population groups.

*Recognizing* the importance of respecting the Human Rights of the persons living with HIV/AIDS, in the month of May 2011, the Congress enacted the HIV/AIDS Bill of the Dominican Republic, which after being adopted by the President, will repeal Law Number 55-93 on AIDS and its Application Regulations, dating from December 31, 1993 and April 8 1996, respectively. This is a transcendental step so that persons living with HIV or AIDS are assured of the necessary personal guarantees, in the framework of the National Response on HIV/AIDS.

*Being aware* that the full realization of human rights and the fundamental liberties for all persons constitute an essential element in the National Response to HIV/AIDS, especially in regards to prevention, support and treatment; the Dominican Republic, with the extensive cooperation of government institutions and civil society organizations, lead actions to reduce the stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS, particularly in the workplace; fulfilling the provisions contained in Recommendation Number 200 on HIV/AIDS and the Workplace, which was the first international instrument of human rights dedicated to HIV/AIDS in the workplace adopted by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in the year 2010.

*Highlighting* the importance that our country places on the equality of access to education for orphaned and vulnerable children due to HIV/AIDS, since 2006, the Dominican Republic has had a National Policy for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children and Adolescents due to HIV/AIDS, and, through the Ministry of Education, undertakes the provisions set forth in the Agreement of Education “*Preventing with Education*”, adopted in Mexico in 2008, by which sexual education policies are formulated and applied for all educational levels, including issues related to life skills.

*Ratifying* the Dominican Republic’s commitment for the achievement of the Universal Access targets, since 2008 there was an increase in the percentage of persons living with HIV/AIDS who were receiving retroviral therapy. In the case of women living with HIV who are expecting, this contributes to the prevention of the transmission of HIV from mother to child.

*Emphasizing* the importance that the inclusion of 7,000 persons living with HIV/AIDS in the Dominican Social Security System has on the National Response to HIV/AIDS, evidences and ratifies the State’s commitment on stimulating the progressive development of Social Security to assure the universal access to an adequate protection during illness, disability, unemployment and old age; as contemplated in our Political Constitution.

*Taking into account* the dire consequences caused by the earthquake that devastated our neighbor country, Haiti, the Dominican Republic has intensified its efforts to design a response to HIV/AIDS from a binational perspective, understanding that these health

conditions go beyond social, cultural, political and administrative divisions, and national borders.

Mr. President,

Highlighting the vital role that the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria plays in national responses to HIV/AIDS in our countries, the Dominican Republic urges the international community to contribute to the sustainability of the aforementioned international effort, and the availability of financial resources accessible for developing countries.

That would be a meaningful support to the efforts accomplished by those countries, in order to give an effective response to HIV/AIDS, including the guarantee of the delivery of retroviral treatment to persons living with HIV/AIDS, which individuals, due to their health condition, require such medications.

Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen,

To assure the persons living with HIV/AIDS the full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental liberties; the access to education, inheritance rights, work, health and social services, prevention, support, treatment, information and legal protection, respecting, at the same time, their privacy and the confidentiality of their serological status, among others, constitutes one of the principal interests of the Dominican Republic.

In consequence, the Dominican Republic assertively adopts the slogan of the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS of “Zero New HIV Infections, Zero Discrimination and Zero AIDS Related Deaths”, also welcomes with great pleasure this important High Level Conference, and joins the efforts of the international community to look for alternative means of financing and of providing the necessary assistance to offer a response to a pandemic that constitutes a barrier that hinders the development of our nations.

Thank you.

