

EGYPT



مصر

The Permanent Mission of Egypt
to the United Nations
New York

بعثة مصر الدائمة
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نيويورك

**Statement of
H.E. Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Abdel Halim
Head of the Delegation
of the Arab Republic of Egypt**

**Before
The General Assembly
“High-level meeting on the comprehensive review of the
progress achieved in realizing the Declaration of Commitment
on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS”**

New York- 10 June 2011

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Mr. President,

Egypt attaches special importance to this high-level meeting, which is held at a critical time junction, to support the efforts of the international community to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS, to take stock of our achievements so far, to enhance our joint work to achieve universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support for all by 2015, in order to eliminate the spread of HIV infection.

Egypt aligns itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Minister of Health of Senegal on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. President,

The spread of HIV/AIDS represents one of the main challenges to achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, especially MDG 6. The past few years reflected our success in reducing incidences of infection in some developing countries, which is attributed to their efforts in increasing access to national prevention, treatment, care and support programs, being implemented in cooperation with the United Nations and its relevant organs, and the success of some Member States in eliminating mother-to-child transmission; however, the continued increase in the estimated numbers of new infections worldwide compared to those undergoing treatment every year since the beginning of the new millennium, and the fact that African Countries remain the most affected, continues to pose a serious impediment to sustainable development efforts.

This continuing challenge requires the international community to deal with it practically and effectively through a comprehensive, equitable and nationally-owned framework in order to ensure that all people living with HIV have access to effective prevention, treatment, care and support in accordance with the specificities of each country and society. The principle of national ownership cannot be overemphasized in this struggle, such ownership ensures the efficiency and effectiveness of HIV-related programs as it guarantees that they will be tailored to the specific needs of each country and society, taking into account their legal, cultural, ethical and religious values and circumstances. We have an obligation to ensure that HIV/AIDS does not become the third cause of death worldwide by 2030.

The elimination of HIV infection requires special attention to strengthening national capacities of Member States, especially African countries, to take into account the specificities the community and society of each State, and enhance its efforts to provide adequate and effective prevention, treatment, care and support programs, and enhances their ability to implement national awareness campaigns to address harmful traditional practices, reduce risk taking behavior and encourage responsible sexual behavior, including abstinence and fidelity, and eliminate stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and their families. This requires considerable increase in international financial resources and assistance to develop and strengthen national institutional and human resource capacities, and the provision of new, effective, good-quality and affordable medicines, ARTs and vaccines.

Egypt believes in the importance of strengthening regional capacities to combat the spread of infection. In this regard, Egypt launched an initiative at the African level to establish a regional center for the promotion of cooperation in the fight against HIV, and to work as a liaison between the centers specialized in this field on the African continent, in full collaboration and with the active participation of the African Union. We hope that international community will support this initiative financially and technically.

Mr. President

The international community has a special responsibility, not only to work to provide the necessary financial resources needed to bridge the present financing gap estimated at 6 billion dollars, but also to find radical solutions to the problems of trade-related intellectual property, especially as

regards medicines and vaccines, in order to ensure that treatment is provided at affordable prices in developing countries, particularly in Africa. These efforts should be complemented by an efficient rationalization of assistance directed towards supporting national, local and community level interventions, and strengthening the role of the family and civil society in combating the spread HIV infections.

The spread of HIV is often a cause and consequence of poverty and underdevelopment, thus, the successful elimination of HIV infection requires a successful sustainable development process where support must be given to the efforts of developing, inter alia, infrastructure, economic, educational, and health systems. Transfer of knowledge and technology is crucial to support these efforts, especially as regards the medical industry.

Furthermore, the international community has an obligation to eradicate the root causes for the spread of infection, including, through combating the illicit trafficking in drugs as a top priority, in addition to working to implement harm elimination and reduction programs, and to address the economic and social challenges which increases the vulnerability of women to HIV infection, and to combat discrimination, all forms of violence and the sexual exploitation against women. Furthermore, the international community must pay due attention to ensuring the peaceful settlement of armed conflicts, especially in Africa. The situations of protracted conflict affects the ability of member states to direct the needed resources to efficiently implement their national prevention, treatment, care and support programs, resulting in a continued spread of infection. Political instability results in increasing the marginalization of women, children and youth and their vulnerability to infection, thus creating additional challenges for peacebuilding efforts in post conflict situations.

Mr. President,

Today we must emphasize our sincere determination to combat the spread of HIV infection and renew our strong political will and full commitment to the principle of national ownership of all prevention, treatment, care and support programs, and to strengthen international cooperation and assistance, without conditionality, in order to maximize our benefits, and strengthen our efforts to address the nationally identified determinants and modes of transmission of HIV, in accordance with the specificities of each member state and community, so as to realize our goal of achieving universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support for all by 2015.

Thank you.