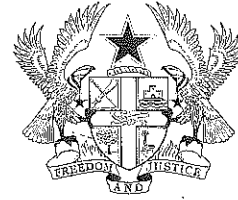


GHANA



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STATEMENT

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY

MR. JOHN DRAMANI MAHAMA
VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA

AT THE

**HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW
OF THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN REALIZING THE
DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT ON HIV/AIDS
AND THE POLITICAL DECLARATION
ON HIV/AIDS**

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 2011
NEW YORK**

Mr. President,

Ghana aligns itself with the statement by the African States. Ghana joined other countries in 2001 and 2006 to commit to the declarations on HIV and AIDS.

Mr. President,

HIV/AIDS is a visible and key component of the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (2010-2016) and is accorded a High Level of Political commitment and leadership with the Ghana AIDS Commission placed directly under the Office of the President.

Ghana recognizes the support of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS and Tuberculosis and Malaria, the World Bank, the US Government, other global Health Partnerships and our bilateral and multilateral partners, in our national response to the fight of the three diseases and the attainment of the health-related Millennium Development Goals.

Ghana is among the 29 African Countries reported by the WHO to have been able to reduce prevalence of HIV/AIDS over the past decade. The national HIV prevalence has declined over the past eight years from a national high of 3.6% in 2003 to 1.5% in 2010. Prevalence among persons 15-24 years has equally reduced from 3.5% in 2003 to 1.5% in 2010.

Mr. President, these modest achievements are attributable largely to a massive scale up under the programme dubbed **“Towards Universal Access- Ghana’s Comprehensive Antiretroviral therapy plan.”**

The implementation of this plan resulted in the number of persons on antiretroviral therapy increasing from under 6,000 in 2006 to over 58,000 by March 2011.

Additionally, Ghana has developed a new five-year PMTCT scale up plan using the four-prong approach and the new WHO guidelines for PMTCT. This is aimed at reaching 95% of all pregnant women by 2013.

Ghana remains an active participant in the UNAIDS Global Task Team on Zero transmission of new infections in children. We commend UNAIDS and the US government for this bold initiative.

Civil Society and Community Based Organisations have been remarkable in the national response. People Living with HIV/AIDS Associations are active members of the various subcommittees and working groups in the national response.

Mr. President,

Ghana recognizes that the main challenge in the fight against HIV/AIDS globally is how to ensure Universal Access to prevention, treatment, care and

support, and to ensuring zero transmission of new HIV infections in children, all by the year 2015.

To be able to achieve these laudable goals, especially for us in sub-Saharan Africa, there is the need for us to invest in improving our weak health systems. The inadequate number of healthcare facilities in many of our countries are major issues of concern.

The rural poor living in remote areas and the poor in our peri-urban slums are the most vulnerable to HIV infections and they are also the ones without access to treatment and care.

In Ghana, we are expanding the community-based health planning and services (CHPS) initiative, which is an expression of the close-to-client policy, as a strategy to reach out to all communities with much needed basic services.

Excellencies, we will need the support of technology to be able to implement a successful "Universal Access" to treatment programme. Second and third generation anti-retroviral medicines will need to be developed so that as development of resistance sets in for the current generation of drugs, there will be another generation of drugs ready to switch onto.

It is equally important that manufacturers of the anti-retroviral medicines make their costs affordable so as to support our scaling up effort towards universal coverage.

The goal of Universal Access to prevention, treatment care and support and to ensuring zero transmission of HIV in children by 2015 may appear to be a daunting task. But it is achievable. The driving force for realization of this goal would be the resources for implementation. Ghana would like to call on all Developing countries to increase their domestic sources of funding for implementation, as a basis for calling on our Development Partners to come to our aid with the needed resources.

In conclusion, Mr. President, Ghana reiterates its calls for prevention to remain the mainstay of the fight against HIV especially zero transmission to children.

Ghana equally calls for increased and sustained funding for the overall response, especially support to Civil Society Organizations, the infusion of massive resources to revamp, sustain and expand the weak Health Care Delivery systems, and making anti-retroviral medicines affordable and readily available to support the treatment component of our prevention strategy.

A lot has been achieved, yet there is even more work ahead of us all. Let us work together to ensure an HIV free world as a gift to generations to come.

I thank you.