

**Statement by Ambassador PARK In-kook
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations
Plenary of the High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS**

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Mr. President,

Since the historical beginning of the global responses against HIV/AIDS in 2001, there have been substantial achievements, including visible reductions in HIV incidence and mortality, along with increases in treatment access, the overall promotion of human rights and dignity of people with HIV, and a scaled-up international commitment for HIV-related funds. Nevertheless, this progress is not enough. We are still faced with the sobering reality that more than 7,000 people, including 1,000 children, are being infected with the virus every day. The legal environment and social attitude surrounding people with HIV continues to be unfavorable. Many people, particularly women and girls, are dying due to a lack of proper treatment.

These challenges should be considered in the context of not only affecting public health, but also undermining development and human rights efforts. In this light, my delegation fully supports the Secretary-General's innovative visions of *zero new infections, zero discrimination, and zero AIDS-related deaths*, presented to us with the six specific goals for 2015. The new vision and goals will bolster the synergy between HIV and other health and development priorities, and subsequently contribute to the overall success of achieving the MDGs and other internationally-agreed development goals.

Based on accountability and ownership for the rejuvenated commitment, I would like to share some ideas of how each stakeholder can bring a measurable impact. First, we need to develop result-oriented programs with a holistic manner. The goals for 2015 are simple and clear. But in order to achieve them within 5 years, entire societies need to participate proactively and foster HIV-free environments without any stigma and discrimination.

Second, it is fundamental to raise public awareness on HIV/AIDS based on accurate information, since this influences the eradication of social prejudice and bolsters the improvement of access to voluntary HIV testing and treatment. To target young people with new communication methodologies, such as social networking services, can be a good approach to prevent new HIV infections.

Third, the continuous provision of proper treatment and universal medical service is crucial to maintain the health of people with HIV as well as to reduce the chances of transmission. In addition, statistics show that more than 6 million people have received ART(AntiRetroviral Therapy), but the treatment compliance rate turns out to be low. Therefore, the provision of regular guidance in treatment through a robust and sustained health system should be recognized as an essential element to ensure the effective care of HIV-positive persons. These efforts ultimately lead to the overall decrease of HIV incidence and mortality.

Fourth, as learned from the past failures in preventing the people with the highest risk from the infection of HIV/AIDS, health and social investment to vulnerable groups, including sex workers, drug users, and men who have sex with men (MSM) must be scaled up. Punitive regulations and restricted access to health services, from which people suffer, have backfired on efforts to eliminate HIV/AIDS.

Mr. President,

Although representing one of the countries with a low HIV prevalence, the Republic of Korea cannot be an exception to sharing the responsibility of global HIV responses. In striving to prevent HIV/AIDS, the Korean Government established a comprehensive healthcare mechanism, including free and anonymous HIV check-up centers and provision of education and ART treatment for pregnant women with HIV.

In the legal and social context, it is noteworthy that the prohibition of any discrimination against people with HIV in the workplace was stipulated in 2008. Furthermore, through the revision of the Regulation in 2010, mandatory HIV testing for the purpose of HIV-specific travel restriction no longer exists. Meanwhile, the 10th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP), to be held in Korea this August, is expected to contribute to raising the public awareness on HIV/AIDS.

Mr. President,

Taking this opportunity, my Government would like to reaffirm our unswerving commitment to continuously participate in the international efforts to eliminate AIDS, and to spare no efforts in making the vision and goals for 2015 a reality. Thank you. /end/