



**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY  
PAUL KAGAME,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**

**at the UN General Assembly High Level Meeting on AIDS**

**New York, 8 June 2011**

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- + President of the UN General Assembly;**
- + Majesty, Excellencies Heads of State and Government;**
- + Excellency, Secretary-General of the United Nations;**
- + Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**I would like to start by welcoming the UN Security Council Resolution passed yesterday regarding the impact of HIV/AIDS on international peace and security. I wish to acknowledge the leadership of the President of the UN General Assembly, the UN Secretary General and the dynamic Executive Director of**

**UNAIDS for continuing to put HIV/AIDS at the forefront of global dialogue.**

**The epidemic continues to cause devastation and anguish to individuals, their families and our societies in general. We all know that the disease has reversed health and development gains in many countries, particularly in Africa.**

**Despite this, funding to find a cure and treatment for AIDS has reached a plateau or even decreased against a backdrop of competing global priorities and challenges.**

**This high Level Meeting gives us an opportunity to revisit the difficulties faced and to build on the modest progress registered so far. It is time to galvanize Member States to commit to a transformative agenda that overcomes remaining barriers to an effective, equitable and sustainable response to HIV and AIDS.**

**Of course, we must also acknowledge that even in the face of enormous economic hardships, courageous acts of leadership continue to inspire solidarity in the HIV/AIDS response. I am pleased to say that since making a commitment to achieve**

**universal access 5 years ago, developing countries have worked hard to scale up their own response through increased financing, education, and information dissemination.**

**Where there have been combined efforts and continued financial resources, the results are there for all of us to see. Prevention has worked and treatment has saved lives.**

**For instance, on our continent Africa, the number of people newly infected with HIV dropped from 2.2 million in 2001 to 1.8 million in 2009. And AIDS-related deaths have declined by 25% since 2005 in sub-Saharan Africa.**

**What is abundantly clear is that investing in HIV prevention, treatment and care is not only the right thing to do; it is the smart thing to do. It has a positive knock-on effect in our social and economic development.**

** Excellencies;**

** Distinguished Delegates;**

**It is evident that no single country or government acting alone can overcome this pandemic. We need a coordinated**

**comprehensive approach that responds to all the aspects of the disease.**

**In fact, recent research findings show that early diagnosis and immediate treatment reduce by over 90% the chances of infecting others.**

**And with the experience we have gathered over time in prevention, treatment and care, we now have a better understanding of the disease, which should inform what we can collectively do henceforth.**

**Clearly, there is still a lot to be done. This includes overcoming side effects and resistance to some antiretroviral drugs. We must eradicate stigma, eliminate gender-based disadvantages, and adopt an integrated approach to the problem. All this calls for a conscious leadership at all levels of our society.**

**Let me conclude by reiterating that the good health of our citizens and the dignity of those infected or affected is their fundamental human right and that our resolve to fight against HIV/AIDS is a matter of social justice.**

**Where stigma, discrimination and inequality persist, the response to HIV/AIDS cannot be effective or sustainable. There can be no higher aspiration than working towards future generations free of AIDS and associated contributing factors.**

**With sufficient predictable financing, shared responsibility, and a coordinated approach, I am confident that we can build on the gains made and win the battle for greater social and economic wellbeing of our people.**

**I thank you for your kind attention.**