

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
DR. BARNABAS SIBUSISO DLAMINI
PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF
SWAZILAND**

**AT THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON HIV AND AIDS**

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President of the General Assembly
Secretary-General
Fellow Heads of States and Representatives
Distinguished Delegates

Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you for convening this important meeting and for your able leadership. Further permit me to extend my appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban, Ki-Moon for his tireless efforts in contributing towards the preparations and success of this process.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by Namibia on behalf of SADC, and Senegal on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. President,

A nation is nothing without her people. The devastating impact of the HIV epidemic has reminded us of that. But as much as it has taken the lives of so many individuals, destroyed families and communities, and inflicted severe damage on economies, it has mobilized our countries to formulate a united response that we dared only to dream of in the early days.

It is my honour today, on behalf of the Kingdom of Swaziland, to share with you both our achievements and challenges in our national response.

Mr. President,

Being in a region, severely challenged in terms of HIV prevalence rate, presents statistics that are daunting but we are encouraged by the most recent Demographic and Health Survey which reports a decline in the rate of new infections from around 4.9 % in 2000 to 2.6 % in 2010.

Nevertheless, the high proportion of new infections relating to young people, especially women, presents a challenge. Swaziland is currently conducting studies on sexual behaviour and the impact of prevention programmes which will inform our future national prevention strategies and plans.

Mr. President,

Our country remains committed to the *Three Ones* principle as well as the concept "Know your epidemic", which emphasizes that the HIV response needs to be uniquely tailored to the situation prevailing in the country. In achieving this *oneness* our new results-based, multi-sectoral National Strategic Framework recognizes the importance of all stakeholders being *on board and buying in* – a fully consultative and participatory approach right down to community level

In 2009, Swaziland piloted an early introduction of ART, based on the *350 CD4 count threshold* and, aligned to that threshold we currently have 70%, of those eligible for ART, enrolled in treatment.

With a National Strategic Framework that includes a concerted focus on prevention, over the past seven years we have increased the number of sites providing PMTCT services from 3 to 142, and, in the process, have reduced mother-to-child transmission of HIV to 10% and we aim to get that down to zero by 2015.

Fully committed to the benefits of male circumcision we have upscaled our programme and, in less than a year, close to 20,000 males – that is 11% of the total male population - have been circumcised.

Our impact mitigation measures have included feeding and protecting the very large number of vulnerable Swazi children, many of whom are orphaned as a result of HIV and AIDS. We have 1500 neighbourhood care points and many community social centres providing the necessary support. Swaziland also has a free primary education programme keeping 90% of OVCs in school.

Mr. President,

The main challenge for Swaziland's national response is now our severely limited human and financial resources. AIDS has inflicted heavy damage on our human capital. Added to this, our country has experienced the double impact of a global recession, together with exogenous circumstances that have significantly reduced the public resources available for the national initiatives that aim to achieve the Millennium Developmental Goals.

We are immensely grateful to our development partners as well as civil society and the private sector for the assistance so far received though have to add that, to maintain momentum in our national response, our needs are greater than the resources so far secured.

We cannot over-emphasize the need for strengthened international cooperation and broader, more focused partnerships to realize all internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

In conclusion, Mr. President,

As a Nation we reaffirm our commitment to all internationally agreed goals and objectives, including agreements dealing with HIV and AIDS reached at all major United Nations conferences and summits.

Thank you.