



**Permanent Mission of the United Republic of Tanzania
to the United Nations**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

STATEMENT BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY DR. MOHAMMED GHARIB BILAL,
THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF
TANZANIA**

**AT THE 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, 8 JUNE 2011

Mr. President

Your Excellencies, Heads of States and Governments

Honourable Ministers,

Your Excellency, President of the General Assembly

His Excellency; UN Secretary- General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to congratulate you and the United Nations for organizing this High Level Meeting on HIV and AIDS which is once again bringing the issue of HIV and AIDS to the Global agenda. We thank the Secretary General for his report *entitled "Uniting for Universal access: towards zero new infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths"*. The recommendations provided therein warrant our serious considerations. We commend the work undertaken by the UNAIDS Secretariat and its co-sponsoring agencies in the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the political declaration on HIV/AIDS. We also welcome the Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, that aims at reducing the number of maternal, newborn and under-five child.

Mr. President,

Tanzanians live with the devastating impact of the virus, on day to day basis. The social economic impact of the HIV and AIDS epidemic in a poor country like Tanzania is enormous. Among the most felt effects of the epidemic is the growth in the number of orphans and vulnerable people, currently estimated at about one million.

Mr. President,

The Governments of the United Republic of Tanzania as well as the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar have continued to implement both the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the political declaration on HIV/AIDS.

Strong political commitment from the President himself and the entire government has enabled the country to achieve progress in combating HIV/AIDS. In encouraging voluntary counseling and testing which is a key factor in the prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS, in mid-2007, the President and First Lady of the United Republic of Tanzania initiated a testing campaign and shared their test results. At the time, close to 2 million people had tested. By December 2010, 13 million had tested. This intervention coupled with the increase in use of condoms, ARVs, a program on Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission and high Information Education and Communication uptake has enabled Tanzania to start observing a decline in the HIV prevalence rates from seven percent for Tanzania mainland to 5.7%; whereas in Zanzibar the prevalence rate is below 1%.

Mr. President,

Our government has put in place modalities to expand the coverage and sustain treatment services through its Health Policy, Health Sector Strategic Plan III of 2008 and Maternal, New born and Child health one plan of 2008, National Multi Sectoral Framework of 2008, and the Health Sector HIV AIDS Strategic Plan (2008). We are also using the Decentralized Health System as per Primary Health Care Development Programme (MMAM) to expand treatment to more primary and community-based facilities. Through these interventions the number of people on ARV has increased to 388,000 by December 2010. In 2010 70% of HIV infected pregnant mothers and 57% of HIV exposed babies are being provided with ARVs.

Mr. President.

On prevention side, the Tanzanian government has put in place HIV prevention including Male Circumcision, control and treatment of opportunist's diseases as well as early detection and treatment of other high risk diseases for the transmission of HIV/AIDS that include Tuberculosis (TB) and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI).

Mr. President,

Combating HIV and AIDS is a responsibility of everyone and I would wish at this juncture to underscore the importance of involving the private sector and the civil society in this endeavour. We wish to acknowledge the support from our Development partners both bilateral and multilateral as well as private sector and social entrepreneurs. The government on its part has provided an enabling environment including HIV/AIDS policy and legislation and has mainstreamed HIV/AIDS in National development Strategy to ensure that more funds are available from the government budget.

Mr. President,

Tanzania faces a number of challenges that may risk the realization of some of the national and Millennium Development Goals and Targets. These include stigma and financing gap for HIV and AIDS intervention which is above 90 percent. To this end, Tanzania is establishing an AIDS Trust Fund and putting in place modalities to scale up national health insurance fund and community health fund towards a universal coverage. This will help to further build national capacity to meet the growing resource needs for prevention, treatment and care, mitigation and building an enabling environment for meeting all the necessary needs of Tanzanian community.

Mr, President, it is also unfortunate that people die prematurely from AIDS because, inter alia, poor nutrition exacerbates the impact of HIV on the immune system and compromises its ability to respond to opportunistic infections. That's why we urge for immediate action on the national and global levels to integrate agriculture, food and nutritional support into programmes directed to people affected by HIV, in order to ensure access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to enable people to meet their dietary needs and food preferences, for an active and healthy life; as part of a comprehensive response to HIV and AIDS.

Tanzanian government will continue to do its part, and among many of the initiatives towards zero new infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. We once again urge the international community to complement and supplement our national efforts and continue to invest in HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support.

I thank you Mr. President.