



MYANMAR

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Statement by

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Head of the Delegation of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

at the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on HIV/ AIDS

New York

(8 - 10 June 2016)

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H.E. Dr. Myint Htwe
Union Minister for Health
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Ending AIDS
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Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to address to this august gathering of distinguished delegates attending this High Level Meeting on ending HIV/AIDS.

This High Level Meeting is very special in that it has adopted a new Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS that will lead to fast track and accelerate the fight against HIV and to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030.

More specifically, this Declaration builds on the 2011 Political Declaration, now aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and also emphasizing evidence-based strategies to effectively fast track to end the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat.

This Political Declaration will provide quality inputs and guidance to the national response, especially for the coming 15 years.

The declaration emphasizes the importance of moving from “a focus on one disease to a more integrated and systematic approach to addressing people’s health needs in a more holistic manner”.

Importantly, it recognizes that HIV is often a cause of poverty and inequality and therefore critical to the achievement of many Sustainable Development Goals including "End poverty in all its form everywhere" as well as to “reduce inequality and secure social justice”.

Myanmar recognizes that human rights are key to effective HIV response to end AIDS by 2030. Myanmar fully supported the idea of removing punitive laws, policies and practices that block access to HIV services for key affected populations.

Myanmar is also in alignment with the fact that greater involvement of people living with HIV and population groups at higher risk of HIV infection can greatly facilitate the achievement of more effective AIDS responses. People living with HIV, including their families, should enjoy equal participation in social, economic and cultural activities, without prejudice and discrimination.

Mr. Chairman,

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. The UNAIDS has identified ***Myanmar as one of the Fast Track Countries*** with a severe epidemic and Yangon as a key city within the Asia Pacific Region. As the Chair of ASEAN Task force on AIDS, Myanmar is working very closely with other countries in the region to achieve Fast Track Targets.

Myanmar also attaches greater importance to combating HIV problem and it was clearly identified in the 3rd National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS (2016 - 2020). It was developed in the context of these new global strategies, aiming to end HIV as a public health threat by 2030.

Myanmar is fully committed to the declaration and we will leave no stone unturned in pursuing the approaches and intention, which are inherent in it.

We would be involving national NGOs, civil societies and community-based organizations as partners in our fight against HIV response. They would be involved as part and parcel of the health care delivery system. In addition, careful and continuous monitoring of HIV/AIDS situation in terms of technical, management, administrative, logistic and social perspective of HIV response of the national program will be made. We will take into consideration various aspects and point of views of HIV/AIDS patients. We will also be emphasizing the social and anthropological angles of HIV/AIDS sufferers. They would be informed about the natural history of HIV/AIDS and the role in our fight against this disease. These would ensure effectiveness of our plan of actions towards ending HIV/AIDS.

Myanmar will also ensure that there will be continuous dialogue with the funding agencies, development partners and like-minded organizations present in the country as well as outside the country. Our health staff will also be alerted time and again regarding the changing HIV/AIDS epidemiological situation in the country. The government would facilitate in conducting regular platform and forum in various states and regions across the country. After all, collective effort, collective thinking, collective approaches are the *sine qua non*.

We should not underestimate the effective role that can be played by PLHIVs and community-based organizations especially located in hard-to-reach areas in

containing the HIV epidemic as well as in reducing the occurrence of new cases. Their role would be highlighted and appreciated by the government and proper and due attention would be given.

We have made remarkable progress in HIV/AIDS response along these years. We are also sensitive to our goals.

At the peak time of implementing our wide spectrum of activities for controlling and containing HIV epidemic, it would be prudent that development partners and donor agencies must not reduce the amount of funding and other types of support necessary by the national HIV/AIDS control program. This is especially relevant to developing countries.

Our governments must also need to review the detailed epidemiological scenario occurring in respective countries so that our program interventions could be carefully designed to suit the specific situation. In addition, we will ensure appropriate and rational allocation and utilization of funds. All these would be monitored continuously and that value for money or each dollar spent must be worth spending it.

The government of Myanmar has demonstrated strong political commitment with HIV being designated as one of the priority diseases in the National Health Plan 2011-2016. We would be emphasizing the important and relevant points of this resolution on political declaration on HIV/AIDS in our new National Health Plan (2016-2021), which is currently being formulated.

Moreover, we will also try our utmost best to ensure an enabling environment for people living with HIV and key population groups to access life-saving prevention and treatment services.

The political declaration will pave a clear-cut road map for the member states in controlling and containing HIV epidemic, which is currently considered as global emergency. It is also critical to achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. We will ensure that no one will be left behind in the AIDS response.

I thank you all.