

Remarks

By

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**Stakeholder Consultation on the UN General
Assembly High Level Meeting on AIDS 2016**

**16 March 2016
Safari Hotel
Windhoek, Namibia**

Director of Ceremonies,

Hon. Juliet Kavetuna, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Service
Services,

Dr Tharcisse Barihuta, UNAIDS Country Director,

Members of the National AIDS Executive Committee on HIV/AIDS,

Members of the Namibian Country Coordination Mechanism of the
Global Fund on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria,

Health Development Partners,

Members of Civil Society, Representatives of People Living with
HIV/AIDS, and Representatives of young people,

Members of the Private Sector,

Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, and on behalf of the UN Family in Namibia, I would like to express gratitude to the Government of Namibia, and in particular to the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services, for the invitation to attend this National Consultation on the upcoming UN General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, scheduled for June 2016.

This is yet another testament to the consultative governance approach that Namibia is fostering, and speaks to the good example of what a healthy democracy should entail.

In addition to providing space for discourse, such a consultation also provides space for reflection on national and international progress made to date.

For example, UNAIDS announced in July 2015 that the number of people living with HIV, and accessing life-saving anti-retroviral treatment (ART), has increased from 700,000 in the year 2000 to 15 million globally.^[1]

New infections and deaths have also been reduced, with evidence showing a drop in the rate of infections from 19,000 in 2000 to 9,600 in 2014.^[2] This notable achievement marks the first time that a global health target has not only been met but also exceeded.

As we reflect, allow me to also congratulate Namibia for playing a lead role in the evolution of the global development framework, through the Common African Position (CAP). H.E. the President, Dr. Hage Geingob, joined the UN Secretary General and the UN AIDS Executive Director to launch the MDG 6 Report that highlights HIV & health achievements.

We should finally celebrate the fact that Namibia has halted and reversed the spread of HIV and is on track to eliminate Mother to Child transmissions & Malaria **by the 2030 deadline**.

^[1] Global MDG 6 Report

^[2] Global MDG 6 Report

These achievements have been realized through strong political leadership and the commitment of Heads of State during past UN General Assemblies on HIV/AIDS. The GA on HIV/AIDS, is organized every five years, to monitor the results and agree on the way forward. Namibian Presidents and First Ladies have always been present and this has led to great achievements both globally and at country level.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2015 was an important year for Namibia and the UN. Namibia celebrated 25 years of independence; the UN celebrated its 70th Anniversary and the new sustainable development agenda with its 17 goals was adopted.

The UN Family will work with the Government to identify ways of domesticating the SDGs, based on the country context and your priorities.

Here in Namibia, H.E the President, Dr. Hage Geingob declared war against poverty, setting as a target the eradication of poverty (SDG 1) by 2025.

And, we cannot talk of ending poverty without talking about HIV and AIDS.

By reducing the number of new infections to less than 200,000 per year and putting 95% of people in need on treatment, the number of deaths related to AIDS can be reduced.^[3] These achievements will decrease the amount of resources needed for HIV and therefore free up resources that can be directed to development and poverty reduction programs.

^[3] UNAIDS Strategy 2016-2021

Ladies and Gentlemen

In just under 100 days the 2016 United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Ending AIDS will take place in New York. The meeting will focus on accelerating the response to HIV over the next five years thereby setting the world on course to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Discussions at the UNGA on HIV/AIDS will be guided by the SDGs and the 2016-2021 UNAIDS strategy. The UNAIDS Fast-Track approach has a set of time-bound targets, including reducing the number of newly infected people with HIV from 2 million in 2014 to fewer than 500 000 in 2020; reducing the number of people dying from AIDS-related causes from 1.2 million in 2014 to fewer than 500 000 in 2020; and eliminating HIV-related discrimination. ^[4]

Therefore and in conclusion, I would like to leave you with one message:

The world urgently needs to increase HIV investments now or risk reversing the major successes achieved in the first 15 years of the millennium.

We need renewed commitment at all levels (the private sector, the civil society organizations and communities) to sustain the response and ensure HIV new infections become a challenge of the past by 2030.

Rest assured that we in the United Nations, stand ready to support the Government, so that together, we can ensure that today's challenges become tomorrow's achievements.

I wish you very productive consultations and I thank you.

^[4] UNAIDS Strategy 2016-2021