

**HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING
AND COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED
IN REALIZING THE TARGETS SET OUT IN
THE DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT ON HIV/AIDS**

STATEMENT

BY

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NEW YORK, 2 JUNE 2006

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President,

For more than 25 years, the AIDS pandemic has inflicted immense suffering on countries and communities throughout the world and had devastating consequences on development. It will take an even heavier toll unless we act with the resolve and leadership required to halt and reverse the spread of HIV. We need urgent and sustained action to achieve the aim of universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support. There are still all kinds of barriers – national and international, legal, financial, social and cultural - which undermine this universality of access. We therefore not only need political leadership and resolve, but also full involvement of civil society, in particular people living with HIV/AIDS, and of the private sector in our action. The inclusive approach of this meeting should set the example for international cooperation and national partnerships in the future. AIDS is an exceptional epidemic because of its scale, but also because of its complexity and the wide range of factors contributing to its destructive spread. It is a human rights issue as much as it is one of the biggest challenges to development. Only a comprehensive approach will ensure the necessary results – a view also expressed by the Secretary-General in its report before us.

Mr. President,

At last year's summit world leaders committed to a massive scaling up of measures to ensure prevention, treatment, care and support for all, including the most vulnerable. The Liechtenstein Government has gradually scaled up the financial resources to assist others in their struggle against this scourge. In addition, it has also taken innovative approaches to generate new funds, such as the doubling of the amounts raised by non-governmental organizations and the pooling of its contribution to AIDS-related activities of UNICEF with other small States as a means of enhancing aid effectiveness. This cooperation complements Liechtenstein's bilateral assistance, in particular to countries in Africa, to strengthen their health

sector in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Liechtenstein is currently spending some 2.2 million dollars on such assistance, and we are fully committed to at least maintaining this level of support.

Mr. President,

Extreme poverty and inadequate access to education, in particular to information on sexual and reproductive health, continue to fuel the transmission of HIV and worsen its impact. These factors are all too often compounded by gender inequalities and violence against women. The increased feminization of the epidemic calls for a clear focus on the special needs of women. Without such focus, universal access will not be achieved. Equally, we have to put children and the youth at the center of our fight against AIDS. We must take urgent account of the specific impact of AIDS on children and make the millions of children affected by HIV/AIDS a major priority for the use of resources.

Mr. President,

The Declaration of Commitment provides a strong foundation for a concerted, targeted and comprehensive global response to the AIDS pandemic. We have gathered at this high-level meeting to foster exceptional action against AIDS and overcome the many obstacles which are still in our way. The extraordinary level of attendance gives us hope that the world community is ready to live up to the enormous challenge. Let us seize this critical opportunity to stand by our commitment from 2001 and to develop innovative ways of working together. Liechtenstein stands ready to do so.

I thank you, Mr. President.