



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

STATEMENT

BY

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AT

**THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SPECIAL SESSION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
DECLARATION OF THE COMMITMENT ON HIV/AIDS**

NEW YORK, 12 JUNE 2008

Mr. President

Mr. Secretary-General

Your Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to express my Governments' deepest sympathy to the people of the Republic of China on the earthquake that has wrecked havoc in that country two weeks ago; and to the people of Myanmar who are recovering from the devastating cyclone of last month. The Namibian nation shares the grief you feel and expresses hope for the full recovery of your nations.

Mr. President

It is indeed a great honour for me to address the Assembly. We meet here to ~~look into~~ review the progress made over the past two years, following the last UNGASS meeting in 2006.

In this regard, we thank the Secretary-General for his report. Furthermore, it is our expectation to leave this UNGASS meeting with an enhanced understanding, further defined set of priorities, and a robust framework for action that will strengthen our collective response in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen

Namibia has made significant progress in achieving the goals delineated in the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. My country's Socio-Economic Development Strategic Plan ~~on Development~~, titled *Namibia Vision 2030*, regards HIV/AIDS as the most serious threat facing the country. Therefore, ~~Namibia's Vision 2030~~ highlights the need to mainstream HIV/AIDS programmes as a a catalyst direct response to our developmental challenges.

~~In addition~~ Recognising the national importance of mainstreaming HIV/AIDS responses, we are pleased I am pleased to ~~note-report~~ that the National Policy on HIV/AIDS, which serves as a guiding framework for a coherent and sustained advance efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS, was approved by our Parliament in March 2007.

Namibia is estimated to have two hundred and two thousand (202,000) People Living with HIV/AIDS; of which around sixty five thousand (65,000) are in need of antiretroviral (ARV) therapy treatment. Through

sustained and united efforts, there are currently forty seven thousand nine hundred and sixty three (47, 963) people receiving antiretroviral therapy.

Mr. President

This translates into Namibia having been able to reach out to, and provide ARV treatment to, over seventy percent (70%) of those in need. I confirm Namibia's sustained commitment to universal access. Allow me to state clearly that we will continue to work hard to ensure that by the next UNGASS meeting, Namibia will have reached universal access targets for its population.

Mr. President, Esteemed delegates,

In terms of HIV prevalence, recent surveys carried out over the past years indicate that the epidemic is stabilizing in Namibia. As regards ARV prophylaxis, it is encouraging to note that over 93% of babies born by HIV mothers are receiving ARV prophylaxis countrywide.

With these advances, the focus for Namibia is now on prevention. The aim is to reduce the incidence of new HIV infection by paying particular attention to the youth, creating awareness, reducing stigma and discrimination.

Mr. President

This progress has been made notwithstanding major challenges and setbacks. Most pressing amongst ~~them~~ ~~challenges~~ ~~is~~ Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS co-infection. Compounding the situation is the increasing number of cases of Multi-Drug Resistant (MDR) and Extremely Drug Resistant (XDR) Tuberculosis.

Mr. President, Esteemed delegates

In order to address these challenges as we strive to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS and to mitigate its effects, Namibia has intensified its interactions with all stakeholders in HIV programming.

At the international level, we continue to receive increasing support from sources such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. At implementation levels, we continue to engage in team work with our partners from the bilateral and multilateral organisations, the private sector, and civil society, including people living with HIV/AIDS as key stakeholders.

Finally, Mr. President,

The Namibian Government remains committed to provide ~~the~~ political leadership and create a conducive environment free of intimidation, discrimination and with full respect for human rights in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

In closing, allow me to reiterate my sincere gratitude to those whose dedication and commitment has made this meeting possible.

On behalf of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Namibia, President Hifikepunye Pohamba, the ~~Namibian~~ government and indeed the ~~Namibian~~ nation, ~~the-we~~ wish ~~is~~ that this same level of dedication and commitment that ~~seats-brought~~ us ~~together~~ ~~here~~ will characterise our united efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS and its effects.

I thank you!