

**General Statement before the adoption of the Political Declaration of the
High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations
on HIV/AIDS**

8 June 2016

Delivered by H.E. Carlos Foradori, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, on behalf of Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States, and Uruguay.

The Government of the Cook Islands has also aligned itself with this Joint Statement.

“Thank you Mr. President,

I deliver this general statement on behalf of the following Member States:

Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, and my own country, Argentina.

We welcome the important gains achieved in addressing HIV and the AIDS epidemic. At the same time, we acknowledge the remaining critical gaps and challenges, with particular concern for all those at risk of being ‘left behind’.

We reaffirm our commitments to the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the International Conference on Population and Development and its Programme of Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences, as well as of the previous Political Declarations on HIV and AIDS.

At this critical moment in the global response, we strongly reaffirm our commitment to ending new HIV infections and AIDS as a public health threat by 2030, including in conflict, post-conflict and other humanitarian crises. Therefore, guided by the full respect for human rights and a gender-responsive approach, and through evidence-based policies and adequate investments, with this Political Declaration, we:

- Reaffirm all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind, with emphasis on addressing structural inequalities and the needs and rights of people living with, at risk of, and affected by HIV, including key populations and their families;
- In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we call for strengthening health systems and capacities for broad public health measures and the promotion of well-being, commit to advancing universal health coverage, access to essential and integrated health services, diagnostic tests and monitoring, and medicines for the prevention and treatment of HIV, including those to address co-infections and co-morbidities, as well as sexual and reproductive health services and other related services; and to social protection for people living with HIV and their caretakers, especially women and girls who bear a disproportionate burden, as well as for children and young people;
- Condemn all forms of discrimination, stigma and violence, including hate crimes, without distinction of any kind, perpetrated against people living with, presumed to be living with, at risk of, and affected by HIV, including by strengthening legal protections and their enforcement, ensuring equality before the law and non-discrimination for all people, and by removing punitive laws, policies and practices that marginalize individuals, undermine prevention efforts and block access to HIV and AIDS-related services, as needed;

- Reaffirm the centrality of empowering all women and girls, achieving gender equality and ending all forms of gender-based and sexual violence and harmful practices, including intimate partner violence, marital rape, sexual exploitation and trafficking, child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, cognizant that without the full enjoyment of all the human rights of women and girls across the spectrum of social, cultural, economic, political and civil rights, we will not be able to end AIDS; and in this context, reiterate the importance of the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality;
- Commit to respecting, protecting and promoting the full enjoyment of the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all, with particular attention to women and adolescent girls and key populations at higher risk of HIV, including the right to make decisions on sexuality and reproductive matters free of discrimination, coercion or violence, the right to access comprehensive, quality, integrated and affordable sexual and reproductive health and HIV and AIDS information, education and services, combination prevention and treatment, and rights related to privacy, confidentiality and informed consent; and commit to preventing and punishing violations of these rights and all forms of coercive practices, including forced sterilization and forced abortion among women and girls living with HIV, and to providing victims with access to justice and redress;
- Express grave concern that AIDS is the second leading cause of death among adolescents globally, that HIV infections are rising among adolescent girls, and that adolescents lack adequate knowledge of how to prevent HIV and AIDS; and commit to taking concrete steps to ensure all girls and boys complete primary and secondary education, to scaling up implementation of quality comprehensive sexuality education in a manner consistent with their evolving capacities and of youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS-related information, services and commodities, regardless of age, marital, HIV or any other status;
- Commit to ensuring transparent, inclusive and strengthened accountability frameworks with the meaningful participation of civil society and other relevant stakeholders at all levels of implementation, monitoring, follow-up and review of the AIDS response, including of people living with, at risk of, and affected by HIV, key populations at higher risks of HIV, community-based, women's and

youth organizations, feminist groups, human rights defenders and national human rights institutions;

- Call for ensuring that reporting on progress on the AIDS response and our fulfillment of commitments made at the 2016 High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS feed into the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, including in the High-Level Political Forum, ECOSOC and subsidiary bodies.

I thank you, Mr. President.