

UNAIDS

UNAIDS STATEMENT at
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Sixty ninth session, Bangkok, April 25-May 1, 2013.
Contact: Mohammed Ali Bhuiyan bhuiyanm@unaids.org

Mr. Chair, Excellences, distinguished panellists and delegations, ladies and gentlemen good afternoon.

On this occasion of the 69th session of the ESCAP Commission, and on behalf of the United Nations Joint Programme of HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS), I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate some key elements of progress and on-going challenges with regards to the issue of HIV/AIDS.

Member States have made bold commitments on HIV through the Millennium Development Goal 6, and the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and MDGs which have been further enhanced through ESCAP Resolutions 66/10 and 67/9. ASEAN, SAARC and PIF have all equally taken up these commitments. Through these bold targets and goals, Member States have confirmed commitment to addressing AIDS towards the ultimate goal of ending AIDS: Zero new HIV infections, Zero discrimination and Zero AIDS-related deaths.

The ESCAP "Asia-Pacific High-level Meeting" on AIDS held on February 6-8, 2012 in Bangkok was critical in bringing together Member States, representatives of key affected populations, CSOs, including FBOs to review progress, exchange good practices and address legal and social barriers to universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services. In all the efforts towards the achievement of international goals and targets, a number of important progress points in Asia Pacific include:

Across the region new infections have fallen over 20% over the last decade. And numbers of people receiving antiretroviral treatment in the region has risen from 18% in 2009 to 46% in 2011.

As outlined through the call at the ESCAP High Level Meeting on AIDS for "National multi-sectoral consultations on policy and legal barriers" to address the need for HIV prevention and treatment services for key affected populations, youth and most vulnerable groups, UNAIDS has been providing support on the issues of addressing legal environments and impact on access to HIV services to Samoa; Fiji; Philippines, PNG and Bangladesh. The National Consultation on policy and legal environments of seven Pacific Island nations took place last week in Fiji, and eight national consultations are planned including Indonesia, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka in 2013. Numbers of countries have closed or in a process of closing compulsory detention centres (CCDUs) and move towards harm reduction approaches. This will be built upon in 2013. UNAIDS will report the progress at the end of 2013.

ASEAN endorsed the ASEAN Declaration on Getting to Zeros at the 19th summit in November 2011 in Bali Indonesia. To translate the Declaration into action at the country-level, the initiative entitled "ASEAN Cities getting to Zeros" is being implemented in 13 cities/sites of 8 ASEAN member states.

SAARC has included the vision of three zeros in its newly drafted AIDS strategy for 2013-2017 with clear focus on Prevention, Treatment, care and social protection and human rights and gender equality including cross border mobility.

Pacific leaders including those from Fiji, Samoa, Kiribati and others have been at the forefront of renewed regional and international movements and efforts towards ending AIDS.

I would be happy to provide you more details, but in the interest of time, let me just say that Asia and the Pacific countries have achieved some remarkable progress in our region- thanks to all your support and leadership.

Nevertheless, there is no time for complacency. We are at a crossroads. Although many epidemics have stabilized, we are seeing increases in infections in some countries and/or geographical areas of countries, and among key populations, and access to antiretroviral treatment in our region is well below global averages. Punitive laws, policies and practices are still hampering access to HIV services in almost all our countries in the region.

AIDS: an unfinished MDG

Sustained and increased leadership and action is therefore needed from Member States.

Ending AIDS – getting to Zero New infections, Zero discrimination, Zero AIDS related deaths—is feasible in the next 25 years.

Post MDG health – HIV-related goals and considerations

- A goal related **eliminating all forms of discrimination and inequalities** in AIDS response.
- **Accessible and affordable quality health services must be ensured for the people who need it most.** Health systems also need to ensure that millions of people do not fall into poverty each year due to the cost of health services (as they do today).
- **The right to health requires increased investment** both from the domestic and external sources.
- **Essential medicines should be available** and affordable though extension of TRIPS flexibilities for another 10 years as well as innovation and protection of intellectual property rights will play an important role for access in future. UNAIDS urges **countries not trade away the public health benefit of their people for other trade gains.**
- **In terms of Governance and accountability, transparency and human rights and extended partnerships,** the post MDG framework should include **time bound and measurable objectives,** easy to understand by people and be raised by politicians. There is strong support for universal goals, but regional/national even subnational disaggregated targets are also necessary.

Ending AIDS can be a distinctive, shared triumph in the coming decades that shows what is possible through mobilized communities, shared responsibility and global solidarity in the post 2015 development agenda.

Your collective action now will define the health and well being of our future generations in Asia Pacific.