



# UN Review on AIDS 2011: Talking Points for National Advocacy by Religious Leaders and Faith-Based Organizations

## Background

In 2011, world governments are reviewing the progress made in the HIV response over the last ten years. In particular, they are reviewing the implementation of commitments made in UN Declarations in 2001<sup>1</sup> and 2006<sup>2</sup>. Central to these declarations is the commitment to achieve Universal Access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010 - but this goal has yet to be realized.

A key outcome of the review will be a new declaration that is expected to be formally adopted by governments at a High-Level Meeting in New York on 8-10 June. A draft declaration will be published in mid-April, after which detailed negotiations will begin. During these negotiations, State Missions to the UN in New York will be consulting with their advisors in their home capitals.

It is therefore important that civil society, including faith-based groups, lobby these advisors to include its key concerns and 'asks' in the new declaration. As a result, a Civil Society Declaration has been developed to support country-level negotiations. This declaration is at [www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/hivaids/accountability/ungass/](http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/hivaids/accountability/ungass/). In addition, the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA), in consultation with its members and partners, has developed the following talking points to support religious leaders and faith-based representatives as they meet with their government representatives in their home countries to discuss the new declaration.

## Talking Points

***Main Message: 'Progress has been made but it is not enough and will be lost if political will and financial commitments are reduced now'***

Much has been achieved in the past 30 years of the AIDS pandemic. Global incidence has recently begun declining and 6 million people are now on life-saving anti-retroviral drugs.

However, much more remains to be done. The number of people infected continues to outstrip the number of people on treatment – by 2 to 1. And, of the 33 million people living with HIV today, 10 million need treatment but do not have access to it. In addition, people living with or vulnerable to HIV continue to face stigma, discrimination and violations of their human rights, which thwart prevention and treatment efforts and deny them access to comprehensive care and support.

If the new UNAIDS 2011-2015 Strategy<sup>3</sup> of 'Zero AIDS-related deaths, Zero new HIV infections and Zero discrimination' is to be achieved, the declaration that will be adopted by governments at the upcoming High-Level Meeting in June must commit to:

### 1. Addressing the root causes of vulnerability to HIV

In particular, the declaration should commit to:

- a. placing the leadership of people living with and most affected by HIV at the centre of the global response

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/dataimport/publications/irc-pub03/aidsdeclaration\\_en.pdf](http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/dataimport/publications/irc-pub03/aidsdeclaration_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/dataimport/pub/report/2006/20060615\\_hlm\\_politicaldeclaration\\_ares60262\\_en.pdf](http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/dataimport/pub/report/2006/20060615_hlm_politicaldeclaration_ares60262_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/unaidspublication/2010/JC2034\\_UNAIDS\\_Strategy\\_en.pdf](http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/unaidspublication/2010/JC2034_UNAIDS_Strategy_en.pdf)

- b. upholding human rights commitments enshrined in the key international human rights instruments as an essential pillar of the global response
- c. ensuring that HIV programmes, policies and funding allocations are based on human rights principles, epidemiological data and evidence of what is most effective and needed
- d. partnering with civil society organizations, including faith-based organizations, to understand and address all barriers (legal, economic, social and cultural) that sustain and enforce injustices that contribute to the spread of HIV, including stigma, discrimination and gender inequality

## 2. Achieving Universal Access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support

In particular, the declaration should commit to:

- a. a renewed Universal Access target of 2015, in line with the MDGs
- b. investing in research to develop new prevention and diagnostic technologies, including for children
- c. sustaining and expanding access to treatment in low- and middle-income countries for all who need it, including by supporting initiatives such as the Medicines Patent Pool<sup>4</sup> and by ensuring that trade agreements or other legislation do not threaten the legal supply of generic medicines
- d. integrating HIV responses with other health and development responses, such as those encompassed by the MDGs and those addressing tuberculosis and malaria; maternal, neonatal and child health; and sexual and reproductive health
- e. ensuring comprehensive care and support – that encompasses physical, psychosocial, spiritual, socio-economic, nutritional and legal dimensions - for all adults and children living with and affected by HIV
- f. strengthening and funding community-based responses, including those of faith communities, as central to achieving Universal Access

## 3. Ensuring accountability and sufficient resources for the HIV response

In particular, the declaration should commit to:

- a clear accountability mechanism that
  - builds on the previous UNGASS system
  - is harmonized with other accountability systems (such as the Millennium Development Goals and the UNAIDS 2011-2015 Strategy) at national and international levels
  - has a clear time-frame for reporting, with clear country indicators to track progress and gaps
  - requires UN-wide and HIV-specific reviews
- funding the HIV response in a way that is predictable and sustainable, including by implementing innovative financing mechanisms such as a financial transaction tax, 'Debt2Health'<sup>5</sup>, and ensuring full funding for national AIDS plans and for key funding mechanisms, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis

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<sup>4</sup> The **Medicines Patent Pool** aims to improve access to affordable and appropriate HIV medicines in developing countries, in particular by bringing down the prices of HIV drugs and encouraging the development of desperately needed new treatments, such as medicines for children. This is done through voluntary licensing of critical intellectual property - making patents work for public health, while giving pharmaceutical companies fair compensation for their work. For more information, visit [www.medicinespatentpool.org](http://www.medicinespatentpool.org)

<sup>5</sup> **Debt2Health** uses debt swaps to free up domestic resources that can be invested in approved Global Fund programs. Under this agreement, creditors forgo repayment of a portion of their claims on the condition that the beneficiary country invests an agreed-upon counterpart amount in health through Global Fund-approved programs. The Global Fund then disburses the counterpart funds through the same systems and on the same principles as it does to regular grants. See [www.theglobalfund.org/en/innovativefinancing/debt2health/?lang=en](http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/innovativefinancing/debt2health/?lang=en) for more information.

## Tips for setting up your meeting

To set up a successful meeting that is most likely to have an impact, it is important to:

1. Identify and ask to meet the government representatives who will be leading the negotiations on the declaration and who will be included in the government delegation to the High-Level Meeting in June. Key sources of information in this regard will be people working within your country's National AIDS Programme, the Ministers of Health and Foreign Affairs and other representatives of civil society.
2. Identify, collaborate with and offer your support to other civil society partners that are also planning to work with your government on the negotiations on the new declaration. Consider whether joint or separate meetings are more strategic in your context.
3. Be prepared. In addition to the talking points, familiarize yourself with your country's 2010 report<sup>6</sup> on its implementation of the 2001 commitments in order to discuss the successes, gaps and ways forward for your country's response to HIV.
4. Ask for follow-up meetings so that you can be updated on the progress of the negotiations and on other preparations for the High-Level Meeting in June.

When you meet your government representatives, you may also consider making the following requests to ensure the inclusion of civil society perspectives in the UN Review:

- Ask that the government delegation going to the High Level Meetings includes representatives of civil society, particularly people living with HIV.
- Ask your government to speak out in public in support of your concerns prior to the June meeting as well as during the closed negotiations

## For more information and contacts

Useful websites:

- [www.unaids.org/en/aboutunaids/unitednationsdeclarationsandgoals/2011highlevelmeetingonaids/](http://www.unaids.org/en/aboutunaids/unitednationsdeclarationsandgoals/2011highlevelmeetingonaids/)
- [www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/hivaids/accountability/ungass/](http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/hivaids/accountability/ungass/)

Useful contacts:

- EAA HIV and AIDS Campaign Coordinator: Ruth Foley, [rfoley@e-alliance.ch](mailto:rfoley@e-alliance.ch)
- Faith-based Representative on the Civil Society Task Force for the UN Review: Iqbal Karbanee, [iekarbanee@mweb.co.za](mailto:iekarbanee@mweb.co.za)

Useful listserves:

- EAA UNGASS2011 listserve. Send an email with your name and organization and the message "subscribe UNGASS2011" to [info@e-alliance.ch](mailto:info@e-alliance.ch)
- Wider civil society listserve: [AIDSreview2011@googlegroups.com](mailto:AIDSreview2011@googlegroups.com). Email [paulinehg@icaso.org](mailto:paulinehg@icaso.org) (provide your name, organization, country, and email address).

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.unaids.org/en/dataanalysis/monitoringcountryprogress/2010progressreportsubmittedbycountries/>