

Mr. President,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Dear Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first of all align myself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

“Ending AIDS by 2030”. That’s a huge promise. It’s a commitment that all people living with or affected by HIV are counting on. The SDG Agenda is a milestone in global health policy. It is our sacred responsibility to fulfil the promise and achieve the ambitious goals set in the Agenda.

As stated in the report of the Secretary General, the global AIDS response has so far delivered more than results. It has delivered the aspiration and the practical foundation, including the biomedical innovations, interventions and partnerships, to end the epidemic by 2030. All that truly remains, the missing link that will determine whether fast-track targets will be met or missed, is the political commitment to implement our proven tools adequately and equitably.

HIV and AIDS remain a challenge for every society - not only from a health perspective. It calls for every government to take responsibility and political leadership if we want to fulfil our common commitment of “leaving no one behind”.

Due to the fact that HIV is affecting the most disadvantaged and stigmatised groups, political leadership is of utmost importance. The social exclusion and stigmatisation of individual groups – based on their gender or sexual orientation, ethnic origin or behaviour promotes the spread of new HIV infections. This also means that we will not be able to achieve the fast-track goals without removing laws which punish homosexuality or fail to recognise drug addiction as an illness.

Of grave concern are adolescent girls and women, who are at particular risk of, and affected by, the HIV epidemic in many regions of the world. Advancing gender equality and empowerment of women and girls is central to effectively ending AIDS.

AIDS is the leading cause of death among adolescents globally, and adolescent girls are the only group among whom AIDS related deaths are rising. We must ensure that adolescents and young people have access to comprehensive sexuality education and youth friendly sexual health and HIV services.

The experience of Germany over the past years shows that access to quality sexuality education doesn't result in earlier sex. Instead, the opposite is the case. In fact, we have one of the lowest teenage pregnancy rates worldwide.

In recent years, Germany has increased its overall financial commitment in the area of Global Health to 800 million Euro annually. We support bilateral programmes on HIV. We are committed to the Global Fund and looking forward to a successful Replenishment Conference in September. UNAIDS remains key to coordinating and strengthening the multilateral response to the AIDS Epidemic.

Investment in health is an investment in the future. Strong, resilient and sustainable health systems are essential to realising

our joint vision as a global community: an AIDS-free world by 2030!

Germany has been very successful in its national HIV response. However, we will continue and strengthen our efforts to significantly reducing new HIV infections, especially in the group of men having sex with men. To this effect, we recently adopted our new integrated strategy for HIV, Hepatitis B and C and other sexually transmitted infections. With this new integrated approach, we want to sustainably contain these infections by optimizing integration and coordination of HIV services with other relevant services. Taking account of common modes of transmissions and increased rates of coinfections among key populations, the strategy aims at providing person-centred and holistic prevention and care interventions. Removing the taboo from sexually transmitted infections and embedding HIV into the context of other sexually transmitted infections may also contribute to reducing stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS.

As mentioned by Secretary General Ban, we must avoid any complacency in the AIDS epidemic. Approaches and mechanisms pioneered by the AIDS response can serve to overcome systemic challenges that give rise to repeated disease outbreaks and new epidemics of chronic diseases, while building towards equitable Universal Health Coverage.

This is only possible if all political leaders assume their responsibility, engage our youth and work meaningfully and trustfully together with civil society and people living with HIV. In this spirit, I reaffirm Germany's commitment and my country's responsibility as part of the responsibility which we all share as the United Nations.

Thank you for your attention.