

PRESS RELEASE

President of Fiji shows continued commitment and leadership on AIDS

President Ratu Epeli Nailatikau announces firm commitment to help ensure AIDS remains at the top of global agendas

Geneva, 18 April 2011—The President of Fiji, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, has underlined his firm commitment and leadership on driving forward the AIDS agenda as he confirms his attendance to the High Level Meeting on AIDS, taking place at the UN in New York from 8-10 June.

“The High Level Meeting is an important milestone for the AIDS response. We must strive to refocus global efforts to ensure HIV remains high on the agenda,” said President Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, a longstanding supporter on AIDS and former UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador. “Millions of people have died, millions are in need of treatment, and thousands of people are becoming infected every day. Complacency on AIDS at this critical time is not an option.”

In Fiji, as elsewhere in the Asia Pacific region, increased action on AIDS is reaping results and the AIDS epidemic is stabilising. However, new infections are still outstripping the number of people being newly starting treatment, and stigma and discrimination are posing serious obstacles to scaling-up progress.

Underlining his continued personal drive to lead on AIDS issues, President Ratu Epeli Nailatikau announced his support to the AIDS response and the High Level Meeting at the ‘Positive Pacific Gathering 2011’, a meeting that brings together representatives of people living with HIV from the Pacific Island Countries.

“President Ratu Epeli Nailatikau is one of our most dedicated advocates on AIDS and his continued leadership is an example to all,” said Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS. “His engagement in the June meeting will play a major role in securing the future of the response.”

As part of the High Level Meetings proceedings, President Ratu Epeli Nailatikau will also engage in a special Heads of State session, hosted by the President of Rwanda. The session will unite leaders in shaping the future of AIDS, health and development.

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UNAIDS

UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, is an innovative United Nations partnership that leads and inspires the world in achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Learn more at unaids.org.

UNAIDS' vision: Zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS-related deaths.