

Ending AIDS means breaking the conspiracy of complacency

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On behalf of the United Nations Secretary-General and the 11 UNAIDS Cosponsors, I welcome all of you.

I congratulate the International AIDS Society for this incredible conference. I thank the city of Durban and the Government of South Africa.

Let me start by saying that Nkosi Johnson's spirit is strong here. In 2000, Nkosi told us his story. He spoke truth to power. He helped us to change the world.

We witnessed the start of a new era, when the voices of people living with HIV broke the conspiracy of silence.

In 2000, people came here demanding respect, rights and dignity. They came to demand access to HIV services. It is fitting, on Nelson Mandela Day, that we are back in Durban to challenge the world again.

In 2000, there were 770 000 people on life-saving treatment. Today, there are 17 million.

In 2000, nearly 500 000 babies were born with HIV. Today, fewer than 150 000 babies are born with HIV. And there are some countries where no babies are born with HIV.

Back then, South Africa was in denial. Today, South Africa is a model for transformation.

Today South Africa invests US\$ 1.5 billion a year. It has the biggest treatment programme in the world, with more than 3.4 million people. And new infections among children have dropped by 84% in the past six years.

The combined efforts of people living with HIV, activists, scientists, political leaders and communities have completely changed the dynamic in South Africa.

This is the kind of transformation we want to see, in every country.

The question now is where will we be in 16 years' time?

AIDS 2016 must mark the commitment to finish what we started and Fast-Track the end of AIDS.

My friends, while much is on track, some things have gone way off-track.

And as a consequence we have lost time, lost momentum and lost lives.

So let me tell you, I am fired up.

Complacency is the new conspiracy—and it must be broken!

Our progress is incredibly fragile. If we do not act now we risk resurgence and resistance.

Today, I am sounding the alarm on prevention. Progress on stopping new infections has stalled for adults. In some countries new HIV infections are going up.

We need to invest in young women, harm reduction, pre-exposure prophylaxis, condoms, voluntary medical male circumcision, social protection and community action.

By 2020, all countries and communities should have reduced the number of new infections by 75%.

Our call in Melbourne for the 90–90–90 targets has been embraced by the world, but unless we urgently close the delivery gaps we will never reach 30 million people with treatment by 2020 or 1.6 million children by 2018.

We need innovation in our health systems. We need to reengineer our approach to health delivery and keep the focus on the community. We must train and empower 1 million more community health-care workers in Africa by 2020.

And let me say, zero discrimination in health-care settings is non-negotiable. We need people-centred systems that integrate tuberculosis, hepatitis C, cancer and reproductive health services. All people should be welcomed to a clinic without fear or harassment



Today, we have our own moon shot. We need continued investment and innovation in research that will deliver the vaccine and cure waiting to be discovered.

I am fired up, because in some African countries 25% of young women will become infected before they turn 25.

If we do not empower young women and girls, stop violence against them and provide access to comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services and rights, we cannot stop new infections.

As Salim and Quarraisha Abdool Karim of the Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa told us, we must follow the science, and make that science available to people. Young women need options to protect themselves that don't depend on men.

And as to the “blessers”, there is only one level I want see. I want the zero level. Zero tolerance for men who put adolescent girls at risk of HIV.

Tonight, I am looking at a wave, the next generation of young people. Young people here and everywhere, you must start free, stay free and remain AIDS-free.

I am fired up, because civil society is being squeezed from all sides. The bold voices we need to hear are being silenced.

I appeal to governments to open the space for community activism, even when it is uncomfortable. Without civil society, we have no AIDS response.

We know we are leaving people behind. When key populations still account for 35% of new infections, where is our outrage?

We know how to reach gay men and other men who have sex with men, sex workers, people who inject drugs, transgender people and prisoners, as well as migrants.

Too often we label key populations as hard to reach. But the truth is we do not try very hard to reach them. This is why we need more initiatives like the United States President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief's new Key Population Investment Fund.

I am fired up, because just when we need to front-load our investments, donor funding has declined—13 of 14 donor governments have cut their funding in the past year. And most African countries have not met their Abuja commitment.

By 2020, we need US\$ 26 billion for the AIDS response. We need a fully funded Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Canada's hosting of the replenishment meeting and its increased contribution is a sign of its commitment.

Let us be clear and honest: many countries will never be able pay for their treatment costs by themselves.

If we are serious about ending AIDS, it is high time for a new political discussion on how to make funding sustainable and predictable.

As Hillary Clinton said when she addressed this conference in Washington, DC, United States of America, in 2012, “This is a fight we can win. We have already come so far—too far to stop now.”

My friends, let me say to you, the Fast-Track response is the only way to control this epidemic.

It is the only way to break the conspiracy of complacency.

And it is the only way to end AIDS.

My friends, if we miss this opportunity, history will never forgive us.

Thank you.

