

Address at ‘Making the Money Work: the Three Ones in Action’

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**Speech by
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Honourable ministers, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends.

Let me start by thanking Hilary Benn for having us here in London, and for your leadership on AIDS.

I also want to extend my thanks to Monsieur Xavier Darcos, the Minister for Cooperation, Development and Francophonie of France, and Ambassador Randall Tobias, the Global AIDS Coordinator of the United States, who along with the Secretary of State are co-hosting today's meeting.

I am particularly pleased to be joined today by my colleagues, the executive heads of several UNAIDS cosponsoring agencies and the executive director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

I would like to welcome and thank all of you for taking the time to attend what we think will be a compelling taking stock of the 'Three Ones in Action'.

Ladies and gentlemen: The global response to AIDS has reached a crucial stage. In many countries we are now moving into a new phase in the struggle against AIDS. Much of it is the result of the bold action of people in this room, whether you are in charge of national AIDS efforts, whether you are AIDS activists, whether you are funders, or whether you work in technical agencies.

First, we have seen greatly increased funding. Last year this reached \$6.1 billion, which is the real base-line for judging the extent of further efforts. Equally important, investments by developing countries are increasing.

Second, we are finally starting to see results, modest but real results. The impact of our collective work has gone beyond the early achievements in Uganda, Thailand and Brazil. Now we are also seeing encouraging signs in countries such as the Bahamas, Cameroon, Kenya and Zambia. And today we have over 700,000 people on antiretroviral therapy, thanks to the combined effort of initiatives such as '3 by 5', the US PEPFAR, the Global Fund, and the World Bank's MAP. While this represents great progress, the need on treatment is immense and there is a long way to go. We also have renewed interest in HIV prevention and increased awareness of HIV vulnerability among women and girls. And, finally, we have a wake up call on the orphans' crisis. None of this would be possible without the leadership of civil society, particularly the strong voices of people living with HIV.

Let me turn to the challenges. For one, funding continues to be a challenge. Yes, we've made quite spectacular progress by any standard in international development, with a three-fold increase between 2001 and 2004. However, the bottom line is that despite this progress the need remains enormous. But let's remind ourselves that such funding needs must always be seen against the even more enormous costs of inaction.

We also know that at the current pace of financing, the funding gap will worsen in the near future, as needs in terms of HIV treatment and support for orphans grow, and as our coverage of HIV prevention improves as programmes are implemented. Over the next few months, we will work hard with many of you here on refining the estimates of resource needs and funding projections for AIDS, including the strengthening of related infrastructure and capacity.

Fulfilling financial pledges and commitments will still require a major effort that I hope

we will see next week in Stockholm at the first meeting of the replenishment process of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. And let me clarify that the needs for the Fund are part of both the forecasted availability as well as the additional amounts that need to be mobilized. We will hear more regarding funding from Minister Xavier Darcos in his statement today.

As we continue to fight hard for the funding, we must work equally hard and openly on the many capacity limitations we face. Many of these capacity constraints pre-date AIDS. However, I want to stress that none are insurmountable. For example, some of the countries most affected by the AIDS epidemic face a true institutional and human resources crisis, which we are slowly starting to address in various ways, including along the lines of agreements reached at a meeting in Oslo just two weeks ago. Let's not fool ourselves, this is not only about training doctors and nurses, this is also about capacity building in communities on the ground.

And last year in April, we agreed on the 'Three Ones' principles for engagement on AIDS. You know them. Ten months later, where are we? We undoubtedly have made a lot of progress because of the endorsement by all of you in the room and at the highest level, such as in January in Abuja at the African Union Summit of 45 heads of state. And as we will hear from Ambassador Tobias there have been some real successes in a number of countries.

Promoting the implementation of the 'Three Ones' is now at the heart of UNAIDS country work and you will find an update on the progress in 64 countries in a report distributed here. It is a very mixed picture—illustrating once again that making the 'Three Ones' a reality on the ground is harder than agreeing to them. This is why today we need to take the principles agreed in Washington to the next level by setting firm goals and making sure they are met within a time limit that corresponds to the urgency of the problem.

Today, we have an opportunity to further clarify international institutional roles on AIDS, and I know that this is a particularly important objective for Hilary Benn. Further clarifying roles among the international organizations is an imperative, and as a UN system, we are committed to collaborate on this path – as illustrated by the participation of so many of our senior leaders here today. Mr Antonio Costa will make a statement on behalf of all UNAIDS' cosponsor agencies.

The path to clarifying international institutional roles has been a bumpy one – not surprisingly, as the issues are complex and the actors and opinions are highly diverse. But it is a healthy process. We cannot afford to let our differences get in the way of saving lives. The history of AIDS has shown us that when we are united, people win. When we are divided, the virus wins.

Today's meeting doesn't pretend to offer solutions for all the problems I have mentioned. But we are here today to take stock, and I believe it is yet another step forward in a crucially important year for the response to AIDS and development more generally. And we could not have had a better host than the UK with their double presidency and the launch Friday of the report of the Commission for Africa.

I would now like to give the floor to His Excellency the Right Honorable Hilary Benn, MP, Secretary of State for International Development of the United Kingdom, to make his opening statement on behalf of the government of the United Kingdom.

Thank you.