

Today, people living with HIV are at the table where policy is made and resources are allocated. They have instilled the notion that universal access to HIV prevention, treatment care and support is not a luxury but it is a right, and it is time to make it a reality for every human being. This has changed the way people worldwide—even those affected by other diseases and issues—view and approach their own health and demand their rights.

Doing what governments cannot

NGOs tackle the work that governments will not do, cannot do, or don't do well. You provide care and support to people in remote rural areas. To the criminalised and those on the margins of society. To stateless people and refugees in times of humanitarian crisis.

You were also the first to call for the creation of the Global Fund. You helped make it a reality. And you demanded that countries stake their fair share and keep their commitments. On the eve of the Millennium Development Goals Summit, this more critical than ever.

Now I am going to ask you to do more. I am calling on NGOs to lead the next big step forward. I am asking you to help the world exploit the leveraging affected of AIDS. To make investments and momentum for AIDS into a bridge for producing larger health and development outcomes. Only with the leadership role of NGOs can we take AIDS out of isolation and fully integrate the AIDS response with the MDGs.

HIV is not a disease in isolation. It has shown us the fault lines in society. It is part of the global fabric of human health, human rights and human livelihoods. MDGs 3, 4, 5 and 6 are one indivisible set. It is time to harness the capacity and passion and expertise built over the last 30 years of the global AIDS response to achieve these broader health and development goals. And I would suggest that unless we harness that expertise and transfer those lessons, then we will not achieve the MDGs by 2015.

Beyond traditional AIDS advocacy

This is why UNAIDS is reaching beyond our traditional NGO allies to other groups for which HIV is a serious concern. I mean women's rights groups, human rights organizations, young people, maternal and child health advocates, those working for better sexual and reproductive health services, people living with TB, migrant workers, and so on.

The AIDS response is already contributing to maternal, newborn and child health goals. The Secretary-General's Joint Action Plan for maternal health is exactly the sort of cross-cutting initiative we at UNAIDS have embraced.

The UN family will work closely with all of our NGO allies to redouble our service delivery efforts towards all of the health MDGs. We will not be successful without your networks, capacity, expertise and passion.

Down to zero

In Vienna, I described a new vision of where we are ultimately heading: our goal is nothing less than zero new infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.

We will reach zero only by harnessing the dynamism, creativity, reach and skills of NGOS, and coming together as one entity—as one energy.

Thank you.

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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.