

**THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY ANNUAL REVIEW OF HIV/AIDS**

Thursday, 5 June 2025

General Assembly Hall, 3:00-3:30pm

**President of the General Assembly,  
Excellencies,  
Colleagues,**

**I speak today on behalf of the Secretary-General.**

**And I do so with gratitude.**

**To the staff of UNAIDS.**

**To the eleven United Nations agencies behind the Joint  
Programme.**

**To the governments and civil society leaders who serve  
on its board.**

**To every person fighting to end AIDS in countries and  
communities around the world.**

**Thank you.**

**Together, you have helped write one of the most  
powerful public health success stories of our time.**

**In this 80<sup>th</sup> year of the United Nations, the AIDS  
response remains a clear example of a multilateral success.**

**More than 30 million people are now receiving lifesaving  
treatment.**

**AIDS-related deaths have fallen to their lowest point since 2004.**

**In sub-Saharan Africa, we see historic gains.**

**What we are seeing is the direct result of countries following the data and science, communities leading, rights being protected and strategic investments being made.**

**It is the result of people choosing action over indifference.**

**Ending AIDS by 2030 is still within reach.**

**But success is not guaranteed.**

**Progress is fragile.**

**AIDS still claims one life every minute.**

**And this will only get worse, as we face a series of threats that could undo all that we have achieved over the decades.**

**Global commitment is fading. Funding is falling. And HIV services and systems to deliver them are being disrupted.**

**The increasing suspension of foreign assistance has caused widespread disruption to HIV services.**

**The costs of these reductions are stark. Clinics closed, staff laid off, treatments in short supply, prevention services**

**reduced, and millions, especially adolescent girls and young women, living at greater risk, and more babies born with HIV.**

**If PEPFAR funding for prevention and treatment services were permanently halted, UNAIDS projects 4 million additional AIDS-related deaths and over 6 million new infections by 2029.**

**This would shatter the possibility of achieving the 2030 goal to end AIDS as a public health threat.**

**We must not allow that to happen. We need to keep up the fight on three fronts.**

**First, we must address the funding crisis.**

**We must work with countries to reverse funding declines.**

**Low- and middle-income countries need debt relief, tax reforms, and increased international support to ensure sustainable HIV financing and greater country leadership in the fight against AIDS.**

**For example, half of sub-Saharan African countries spend more on debt than health – at interest rates far higher than rich countries.**

**Addressing debt distress is crucial for their future.**

**Second, the attacks on human rights must end.**

**Protecting health means protecting human rights.**

**Punitive laws, vigilante violence, and hate speech against minorities worsen stigma and push people away from lifesaving HIV services.**

**We must choose courage.**

**Courage to stand for human rights.**

**Courage to repeal punitive laws.**

**Courage to stop the hate, the violence, and the silence that often surrounds marginalized populations.**

**Third, we must continue to support the vital work of community-led organizations.**

**They are on the front lines: delivering services; defending rights; fighting stigma; and ensuring no one is left behind.**

**But today, many of these organizations are being defunded and dismantled just when they are needed most.**

**We are cutting the rope just as we are pulling people to safety.**

**We cannot let short-term cuts destroy long-term progress.**

**Even if we end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030, tens of millions will still be living with HIV.**

**They will still need care, treatment, protection, and support.**

**They will still need access to new medical technologies like the breakthrough injectable medicine to prevent and treat HIV, which must be urgently scaled-up.**

**The new Global AIDS Strategy soon to be finalized by UNAIDS can lay the foundation for a sustainable, country-led, long-term response, and propel us to 2030 and beyond.**

**Excellencies,**

**The end of AIDS is not a mystery.**

**From the very start, this fight has always been a choice.**

**A choice to invest.**

**A choice to protect.**

**A choice to act.**

**A choice to stand together in solidarity, not just until 2030, but for as long as it takes.**

**Let us make that choice now, and make it count.**

**Thank you.**