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Visit to UNAIDS, 23 November 2018





REDUCING THE IMPACT OF AIDS TODAY

UNAIDS Geneva, Switzerland
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THANK YOU MICHEL FOR YOUR KIND WORDS AND FOR INVITING ME TO UNAIDS TODAY.

I feel humbled and privileged to be here.

Especially since it is World AIDS Day in just over a week's time.

And it will be the 30th World AIDS Day we've marked since the beginning of the epidemic.

Let me begin by saying that these last four years spent as a UNAIDS International Goodwill Ambassador have been an incredible experience for me.

Emotional, life-affirming and educational.

And I continue to learn about the HIV response.

So, what have I learnt?

I HAVE LEARNT THAT THIS EPIDEMIC IS FIRST AND FOREMOST ABOUT HOW WE TREAT PEOPLE.

When we treat people with respect and dignity.

We reduce the impact of AIDS.

When we allow women and girls to make choices about their lives.

We reduce the impact of AIDS.

And when we give young people knowledge and information.

We empower them to protect themselves from HIV.

And we reduce the impact of AIDS.

When we no longer marginalize or criminalize people for who they are or who they love.

We reduce the impact of this epidemic.

DURING MY COUNTRY VISITS WITH UNAIDS I HAVE MET SOME REMARKABLE PEOPLE.

Mothers living with HIV but healthy, and bringing up children free of the virus because of antiretroviral medicines.

Women able to support their families because of businesses set up to employ women living with HIV.

Young people leading the response to the epidemic.

And vulnerable groups—such as gay men—braving the stigma and discrimination too often associated with the virus.

SO, I AM HERE TODAY TO SUPPORT UNAIDS IN ITS CALL FOR PEOPLE TO HAVE ACCESS TO HIV TESTING, TREATMENT AND PREVENTION SERVICES.

No one should fear having an HIV test.

Everyone should have access to treatment if they need it.

And people need the information, knowledge and tools to protect themselves from HIV.

I still dream of a world without HIV and AIDS.

One day I am convinced there will be a vaccine and a cure.

But let's use the knowledge and tools we already possess.

To reduce the impact of AIDS TODAY.

Thank you.

— VICTORIA BECKHAM, UNAIDS INTERNATIONAL
GOODWILL AMBASSADOR



