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UNAIDS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REMARKS

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Chair, Excellencies, Minister of Health and delegates at the World Health Assembly WHA, thank you for the leadership you show in responding to colliding health crises. The whole world now knows how vital our work is. There is welcome attention on the need to prepare for pandemics and ensure health security.

Crucially, we have lessons from four decades of responding to the AIDS pandemic, and from two and half years of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. I'll touch on three of these lessons: access, financing, communities.

Access: To end AIDS, beat COVID-19, and stop the pandemics of the future, we need to ensure that there is global access to life-saving, pandemic-ending health technologies. We need to replace intellectual property rules which restrict access to life-saving medicines for people in the Global South, with ones that require technology sharing. This would open up access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatments, and to new emerging "long acting" medicines for HIV prevention and treatment, as well as for medicines for other pandemics.

Financing: Our collective health security, and the effectiveness of global pandemic responses, requires that we adequately finance them. This includes fully funding the Global Fund. This means too that low- and middle- income countries need to be able to increase health investments through progressive domestic resource mobilisation and international solidarity; not shackled by debt, or marginalised in the allocation of the IMF's Special Drawing Rights.

Communities: To defeat pandemics and protect the health of all people, we need communities to be involved in providing services as an integral part of the public health response. Communities, who know the situation on the ground best and have the essential relationships of trust, need to be given the resources and the space to lead.

We can beat pandemics, and we can protect the health of all—if we are bold in tackling inequalities, if we place human rights at the centre of our response.

Thank you.

