



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

**STATEMENT BY MS. LAHYA SHIKONGO, SECOND
SECRETARY,**

**AGENDA ITEM 11: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARA-
TION OF COMMITMENT ON HIV/AIDS AND THE POLITICAL
DECLARATIONS ON HIV/AIDS**

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(Check Against Delivery)

Madam President,

HIV/AIDS remains a challenge for Namibia, and we thank you for once again scheduling this important debate. In the face of decreasing attention to this epidemic, it is heartening to know that the international community remains engaged on this important issue.

Madam President,

Namibia has recorded remarkable successes in the last five years. The Namibia Population-based HIV Impact Assessment (NAMPHIA) which was carried out in 2017, and announced results in August 2018 shows that 77% of all HIV-positive adults in Namibia have achieved viral load suppression, a widely used measure of effective HIV treatment in a population, surpassing the UNAIDS target of 73% by 2020. Compared with the UNAIDS 2012 estimates, Namibia has reduced its adult HIV incidence rate by 50% and among women, these figures are even higher. Namibia has also nearly reached the 90-90-90 UNAIDS targets by having a recorded 86-96-91, and all concerted efforts are being made to scale up those figures even further.

These accomplishments were made through the strategic expansion of HIV prevention and treatment services, with a focus on viral load suppression at the individual and community level, and the swift implementation of forward-leading HIV policies. And in this regard, it was absolutely vital to have innovative, data driven prevention, care and treatment to assist those affected by HIV.

Madam President,

Several challenges still remain, and the high infection rates among young women aged 15-24 continue to worry my government, and all efforts need to be scaled up to target this key population in prevention, treatment and other assistance. Key to tackling the spread of HIV among young and adolescent girls will be strategies that include access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, access to essential health-care in regards to sexual health, and gender empowerment policies.

Another challenge that remains is getting more men tested, and promoting prevention in that cohort. In this regard, male circumcision has been proven to work and the Ministry of Health and Social Services has been increasing advocacy in that area.

Madam President,

Success in Namibia is underpinned by strong political will from all sectors. As a high HIV-burden country, engagement on HIV eradication has had to come from all sectors, and not just the Ministry of Health, but Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance and other key stakeholders.

Adequate funding for the HIV programmes is also vital, therefore Member States need to scale up any-and all funding. In Namibia's case, the government pays for 64% of the overall HIV program and purchases nearly all antiretroviral — or ART — medications itself instead of donor funding. The existence of strong partnerships with UNAIDS, PEPFAR and Global Fund also play a crucial part, especially in the field and we continue to rely on their expertise in this regard.

Engaging the public remains the fight against HIV/AIDS is key to eliminating the virus, as people have to have personal commitments if we are to make any headway. In that regard, Namibia has explored innovative ways of male engagement, delivery of innovations such as HIV self-testing, Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis and engaging local councils in greater accountability and involvement in the HIV response.

With this, Namibia is hopeful that we will surely be updating you on how we have reached, and surpassed the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets in 2020.

I thank you,