

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR NEVILLE GERTZE,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA TO
THE UNITED NATIONS, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION
OF COMMITMENT ON HIV/AIDS AND THE POLITICAL
DECLARATIONS ON HIV/AIDS - ITEM 10**

12 June 2018

New York

Mr. President,

1. Namibia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Tanzania on behalf of the Southern Africa Development Community in short SADC, as well as with the Statement delivered by the distinguished Representative of Kenya on behalf of the African Group. My delegation also joins other member states in thanking you, Mr. President of the General Assembly for convening this important meeting.
2. At the outset, I wish to reiterate Namibia's strong commitment to the 2016 Political Declaration for Ending AIDS by 2030. Towards this end, I am pleased to share with this August assembly that Namibia is making good progress in domesticating the Political Declaration through the country's new Strategic Framework on HIV/AIDS for the 5 year period 2017/18 to 2021/22. This Framework is linked with the country's 5th National Development Plan, which in turn is also linked to Agenda 2030. The Government of Namibia has taken the lead in many areas of the Fast Track agenda by:
 - (1) committing 30% of HIV response budget to prevention,
 - (2) delivering on majority of Global Coalition on Prevention action items,
 - (3) prioritizing combination prevention pillars in the new national strategic plan on HIV/AIDS.

Mr. President,

3. Engaging the public in the fight against HIV/AIDS is key to eliminating the virus. There is absolute need for 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 promoting greater accountability and involvement in the HIV response. Government also continues to focus on high impact interventions which reduce new HIV infections and mortality.

4. I cannot agree more with Secretary General Gutierrez in his strong conviction that prevention is critical to our collective fight in eradicating and ending the HIV and AIDS epidemic.

Mr. President,

5. In the Namibia National Strategic Framework for HIV, we follow a two-pronged approach which includes prevention strategies and treatment strategies.

Prevention strategies include:

- The introduction and scale up of Voluntary Medical Male circumcision
- We will continue to provide Condoms and to increase distribution channels
- Namibia will continue to Advocate for increased uptake of Prevention and Treatment services
- We remain focused on identifying those amongst the population who are at high risk of being left behind there is need for us to design interventions that address specific problems for these populations e.g for adolescent girls and young women
- We have prioritised Pre Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) as one of the key prevention approaches in the new National Strategic Framework for 2017-2022
- Any person with substantial risk of acquiring HIV infection can access PrEP from public health facilities. The program focuses on high risk population groups such as discordant couples, Female Sex workers (FSW), and Men having Sex with Men (MSM)
- It is essential that we ensure that structural barriers hampering access to HIV prevention Treatment services for specific community groups who are not readily accessing HIV services are removed.
- Namibia also wishes to highlight the importance of focusing on Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

6. Our Treatment strategies amongst others include,

- Treating all patients who are HIV positive. We have rolled out this treatment campaign at national level since 2017 and is in line with the recommendations of the 2016 UN Political Declaration for ending AIDS by 2030.
- Decentralization of HIV services through Nurse Initiated Management of ART (Anti-Retroviral Treatment).
- Differentiated care models such as Community Based ART and Community adherence clubs are making a positive contribution.
- Scaling up of cost effective testing services such as index partner testing.

Mr. President,

7. Our next Steps by 2020 are,

- The Ministry of Health is in the process of reorganization that should further support coordination, effective use of staff, and improved implementation of services, thus ensuring that HIV is integrated into the entire health system and taken out of isolation.
- We believe that public Private Partnership plans and policies will also further bolster linkages of health within the Namibian economy and engage non-traditional partners in the response
- Namibia is on track to reach the 90-90-90 UNAIDS Targets
- By the end of 2018, Namibia will further deliver on Fast Track targets through:
 - (1) developing and implementing an elimination of Mother To Child Transmission of HIV roadmap including subnational plans,
 - (2) Initiating process to sustainably financing the HIV response in line with Universal health Coverage,
 - (3) increase synergies with social protection and legal/policy systems to create a more enabled environment to deliver the HIV response.

8. In conclusion Mr. President, Namibia remains committed to the 2016 HIV Political Declaration. We continue to work with all bilateral partners, particularly UNAIDS and call on the global community to implement the political declaration fully so that we eliminate AIDS by 2030.

I thank you,