



**PLENARY STATEMENT BY VICE PRESIDENT K. B. AMISSAH-ARTHUR OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA AT THE HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON AIDS, 70<sup>th</sup>  
SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NEW YORK, 8<sup>th</sup>  
JUNE 2016**

**Mr President,**

I congratulate you on your leadership of the 70<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly. Ghana commends you and the Secretary-General for convening this High Level meeting on ending AIDS.

In 2011, Ghana joined the international community in committing to the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and to the ten targets developed by the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS.

Our National Progress Report for the last five years, show significant progress in the key target areas of the Declaration.

Our Government has demonstrated increasing ownership of the HIV response through advocacy, policy development and financial support that increased over ten-fold between 2011 and 2015. These, along with leadership commitment at various levels and across multiple actors, including civil society, the private sector and Development Partners have contributed to the progress.

Between 2009 and 2014, we recorded a 30 per cent reduction in new HIV infections and a 43 per cent reduction in AIDS-related deaths.

Civil Society and Community-based Organisations have been remarkable in extending the reach and intensity of the national response to communities and vulnerable groups.

The Global Fund, PEPFAR and UN System have also remained committed.

Notwithstanding our achievements a number of challenges remain.

- HIV infection continues to spread,
- The majority of Persons Living with HIV are yet to be put on treatment,
- Women are disproportionately affected,



- Stigma and discrimination persist,
- Comprehensive knowledge on HIV in the 15 to 24 age group remains low,
- Sustained supply of HIV commodities is a challenge.

**But Mr President,** we are committed that **“No one must be left behind”**.

We are working to accelerate access to HIV testing and treatment toward the 90-90-90 target. Ghana has incorporated the Fast Track target in our newly developed National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan. In the next five years, we are committed to breaking the trajectory of the HIV Epidemic.

As part of efforts to close the testing gap and sustainably place and keep people with HIV on treatment, Ghana recently launched a national campaign on the “First 90”, to accelerate testing and actions towards universal treatment. We project that this will result in over 45 per cent of the population knowing their HIV status by 2020. We are committed to this ambitious target, through mobilizing people and resources, with the support of our partners.

The National Strategic Plan adopts a **“Treat All”** policy.

Access to safe, affordable and efficacious medicines, including diagnostics and related health technologies, is critical in enhancing the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS. Ghana, therefore, commends the Secretary-General for the establishment of the High Level Panel on Access to Medicines and looks forward to the findings and recommendations of the Panel.

**Mr. President,**

Sub-Saharan Africa remains the worst HIV affected Region. AIDS is the leading cause of death among adolescents and women of reproductive age. Yet to date we have been reliant on the importation of ARVs. To ensure universal coverage and sustainability, we must work together to change this narrative.

Ghana affirms its commitment to the African Union Roadmap on AIDS, TB and Malaria, which highlights, among others, priority actions to ensure accelerated access to affordable and quality-assured medicines and health related commodities. In this regard, we support the call for protection and enforcement measures for intellectual property rights to be made compliant with the WTO



TRIPS Agreement and be interpreted and implemented in a manner that supports this and similar regional and national initiatives.

Ghana lauds the effort of the Secretary General for the “**Every Woman Every Child**” initiative. The Government of Ghana has also launched national campaigns on “**Ending Child Marriage**” and on reducing the incidence of HIV among adolescents and young women, with the aim of reducing gender-based violence and enhancing access to social protection programmes that benefit people living with HIV.

Interventions to protect human rights, preserve dignity and improve access to quality health have been introduced.

To ensure sustainable and predictable funding for the national response, we are diversifying sources of HIV funding. The Ghana AIDS Commission Bill currently before Parliament contains clauses establishing and resourcing an HIV and AIDS Fund.

While acknowledging that mobilization of resources at the national level is necessary, significant scaling up of global funding will be required to end the AIDS epidemic and avoid a rebound of HIV infections. AIDS remains both a universal challenge and a universal responsibility, and international financial support to complement domestic funding of HIV/AIDS programmes is critical, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. The benefits of investing in AIDS are evident.

**In conclusion, Mr President,**

I wish to express Ghana’s support for the 2016 Political Declaration. We call on the international community to continue to support efforts to harness the AIDS machinery to tackle broader global health and development challenges.

I thank you.