

The Mandela Day Dedication of Renewed Commitment Let's Stop AIDS and TB in Memory of Nelson Mandela

Durban, July 18, 2016

16 years have passed since we marched in Durban and handed over a memorandum titled **Global Manifesto to Save 34 Million Lives: Measures Needed to Rapidly Expand Access to Essential Treatments for HIV/AIDS**. We demanded “Health before profits!”

Since then the world has made huge advances against HIV. Most notably, 17 million people are currently receiving HIV treatment. This has been a revolution for human rights.

This we know. But we believe our main focus at the 21st International AIDS Conference should not be on our successes, but on our outstanding challenges and our failures.

The spotlight must now be squarely on the 20-million people, mostly poor, marginalised and criminalised, stuck away in all corners of the world, who are dying in undignified surroundings, often far away from any semblance of a functioning health system and even further away from the ARV treatment that saves lives.

It is an indictment on all of us that people are still dying in large numbers and that people, especially women and girls, continue to be infected at a frightening rate.

Silence (again) = Death (again)

As civil society we are not keeping quiet. We will now speak – loudly, clearly and with much anger – for these 20-million who wait in hope for treatment that is their fundamental human right.

Not only are we currently failing to provide treatment to 20-million people, we are also failing to prevent new infections. *We are not closing the tap.* We have the tools and knowledge to prevent many infections, but we are fiddling around while our house is burning.

We have fancy campaigns that look good on paper, but if we look at the numbers, do not achieve enough. We have lots of rhetoric, but little real commitment. Our lives and those who we speak for are not an advertising campaign.

Despite being preventable, HIV and TB still kills over a million people per year, that is 3,000 people a day, 125 people an hour. That is three double-decker Airbus A380s crashing every single day and killing all on board. *We know that to prevent HIV, we need to treat HIV.* It is simple, we must get on with it.

HIV and TB is a political crisis. It is a crisis of bad governance.

Because HIV and TB are preventable it is a crisis that you, leaders of government, must accept responsibility for. When you become government leaders, you become servants of society. You need to listen to our cries.

The global AIDS and TB response is at Code RED. This is not rhetoric or a cheap headline. As civil society we see and touch death every day. It is devastating.

When we marched 16 years ago we faced a human catastrophe. We the people declared AIDS a global emergency long before the politicians woke up. 100% of people were in a line waiting for treatment. That line is shorter now. There is now hope.

We now have many of the bio-medical tools we need to end this crisis. But that is not enough. AIDS and TB is also a crisis of inequality, a crisis of democracy, a crisis of gross profiteering from essential medicines continued by multinational pharmaceutical companies, a crisis of oppression and human rights denial. It is a crisis of the \$7 billion a year that is missing to fight HIV.

The same factors that are fuelling war and extremism are driving the HIV epidemic. They are social exclusion, denial of fundamental rights, gross and undignified inequality at all levels, a skewed focus on funding war and poverty. More is spent a week in fighting terrorism than a year on AIDS. Yet we agree that AIDS is a greater threat to life, sustainable development and human security.

We find it morally abhorrent that world leaders just stand by and watch as the global AIDS response falters. Worse, that some pretend we are on track. Today, in Durban, we are telling world leaders not to turn their backs on this crisis. We call on leaders in HIV and TB to lead a new charge.

You talk of the “end of AIDS” and 90-90-90. But you must prove you have the commitment it will take to reach these worthy objectives. Do not repeat the mistakes made in the early sixties when victory was prematurely declared over TB. TB did not end. Today, TB kills 1.5 million-people per year, many of them living with HIV. TB needs political commitment and a massive injection of resources.

Restore Hope to the AIDS Response

We ask that you carefully read and take to heart the demands we are giving you today. These are not nice-to-haves, they are life-saving. If you act on these demands the outcome will be simple - respect for human rights and an end to all forms of discrimination, ensuring all marginalised people receive the treatment and care that is their human right.

There is hope, there is a solution. Our global response to AIDS started divided. 16 years ago activists in South Africa were in a bitter fight with the government of Thabo Mbeki. But when we united we saved lives. The same is true globally – when we as governments, people, researchers united - we were able to achieve something unique in the world so far.

At a time of death we saved lives. At a time of deepening inequalities we started to create equality.

Some of our governments made some commitments to putting the right to healthcare before other interests, to regulating profit-hungry private companies with the goal to save millions of lives.

Do not dare to abandon this commitment.

Finally, several of you addressed in this memorandum are coming to the end of your terms in your current office. We make this appeal to you, not only in your official capacity, but also as fellow human beings. Take our crisis seriously and respond seriously to the demands made in this memorandum. Become AIDS activists when you leave office!

We request a preliminary response to these demands during the closing plenary of this conference. If you don't, you will look back on today and have to live with the shame of not having done all you could to end the ongoing HIV emergency. If you don't we will question your commitment.

To: United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon:

The last 10 years have seen the largest expansion of access to medicine in history. But we are only half way there and this expansion is deeply threatened. In the final year of UN Secretary Ban Ki Moon's term there is a clear opportunity to act boldly to address key crises facing people living with HIV.

1. Having convened the High Level Panel on Access to Medicines, we ask that the Secretary General commit that the report and recommendations will be made publicly available as soon as they are completed, so that they are not diluted or ignored because of the opposition of some.
2. We also ask for the Secretary General's personal intervention to provide a political space this year for the world community to meet and resolve how to prioritize the human rights to health and re-think the systems of research and development and access to new medicines that are failing so many.
3. Lastly we demand that the UN Secretary General, working with UNAIDS, convene an emergency funding conference to secure at least \$7billion per year for the next five years needed to fill the identified funding gap in AIDS financing.

To: Michel Sidibe, Executive Director, UNAIDS

UNAIDS must admit there is a crisis in the AIDS response, that it is code red. There is a crisis of funding; a crisis in healthcare systems; a crisis in support of

civil society. Rather than prematurely talking about the “End of AIDS”, UNAIDS must lead the call to treat every person living with HIV – the 54%, the 20 million left behind.

1. We demand that UNAIDS create a rapid plan of action to address the AIDS funding crisis. Given donor funding cuts now recognized and reported by UNAIDS, the agency must document the impact of these cuts, work with the Secretary General to convene a financing conference, and issue a clarion call to all actors to ensure that the world acts to address it.
2. UNAIDS must also start to much more aggressively publicize a watch list of countries that have not dismantled exclusionary laws and policies that marginalise, criminalise and undermine interventions aimed at key populations.

To: Mark Dybul, Executive Director, Global Fund

We call on the Global Fund to reverse decisions that undermine a full, truly global AIDS response. The current ambitions of the Global Fund are indefensibly low, allowing donor and implementing country governments off the hook. If the current \$13 billion request from the fund is insufficient to achieve AIDS treatment for all alongside a robust AIDS, TB, and malaria response, then the Fund must say so.

1. We demand that Global Fund remain global and avoid reversing the AIDS response by withdrawing prematurely from middle income countries.
2. We demand it discontinue its transition policy and ensure that the rights of people living with HIV and key populations are not sacrificed.
3. We demand Global Fund leadership on urgently finding strategies to fund activism and independent civil society. Without activism there can be no 90-90-90. It is the fuel for the global response; the conscience of the dispossessed.

To: US Ambassador Deborah Birx, US Ambassador Patrick Gaspard

The United States has been a clear leader in global AIDS funding—contributing more than any donor to the AIDS response. Yet leadership comes with responsibility.

1. Total US global AIDS funding has been flat-lined for several years—which has legitimated other donor countries doing the same or cutting. The United States must increase funding for PEPFAR and the Global Fund and lead other countries to follow suit. We need at least \$2 billion more from the US per year by 2020 to reach the 90/90/90 targets. We call upon Ambassadors Gaspard and Birx to build a clear investment case and pick up the phone to the full list of US political leaders in office or seeking office to build a political coalition for this increase. Without it, PEPFAR will falter, the Global Fund will fall far short of its mission, and an AIDS free generation will not be achievable.
2. India provides the vast majority of generic AIDS drugs used in the world, including those purchased with US money. The United States must cease pressure on India and other countries to stop using policies that support the production of affordable generic medicines.
3. We demand the US government follow President Bill Clinton’s example here in Southern Africa and issue an executive order banning the use of US trading power and negotiations to seek changes in the laws of India and other countries that would limit the ability to produce quality, affordable medicines.

To: Director General Margaret Chan, World Health Organisation

1. WHO as the technical normative agency on health has a primary responsibility to ensure all people with HIV have access to the best standard of care. We demand that WHO immediately invest in an emergency fund to support countries to implement the December 2015 “Test and Start” HIV treatment guidelines—delays in national policy changes cost lives, and it is WHO’s solemn responsibility to ensure all countries have changed their national guidelines and are implementing Test and Start on a national scale before World AIDS Day, December 1 2016.
2. WHO must support dramatic changes to the current, untenable drug research and development system--because patent monopolies and other intellectual property rights barriers are driving up the costs of newer, better tolerated medicines—resulting needless deaths and wasted funding. WHO must be a global leader, blazing a trail so that

innovation no longer results in 20 year, deadly patent monopolies so that medicines are kept out of reach.

To: South Africa's Minister of Health Dr Aaron Motsoaledi

1. We demand that before World AIDS Day 2016 the Minister, working with the SA National AIDS Council, Treasury and civil society, develop a costed National Strategic Plan to ensure all people living with HIV in South Africa have access to antiretroviral treatment by 2020. This plan must identify and make provision for the health workers and management systems needed to ensure treatment for all.
2. We demand that before World AIDS Day 2016, the Minister publishes a finalised policy regulating the employment of Community Health Workers across all provinces in South Africa under fair, dignified and unionised working conditions. We demand that the Minister intervenes to ensure the reinstatement of all the community health workers dismissed in the Free State in April 2015

To: The Presidency of South Africa

South Africa is still the epicentre of the AIDS epidemic. The country's leadership remains vital to the global AIDS movement. We are concerned that South Africa's response to AIDS has been badly undermined by corruption and mismanagement - a problem also prevalent across other parts of the world. We therefore make the following demands:

1. We demand that the Presidency takes steps to ensure all MECs for Health (provincial health ministers) and other officials working in the health system, who are implicated in fraud or corruption, are suspended or dismissed within the next six months. Free State MEC for Health Benny Malakoane, who is facing serious charges of fraud and corruption, must be dismissed immediately.
2. We demand that the Presidency prioritises the swift finalisation of the long overdue National Intellectual Property (IP) Policy and a time frame for law reform that must follow. South Africa's IP policy must ensure that the right to health is prioritised over the vast profits of pharmaceutical companies as demanded by the Constitution of South Africa. Together with BRICS and

African Union allies South Africa must resist pressure from the United States and the pharmaceutical industry aimed at blocking progressive law reform.

3. We demand that the Presidency announce concrete and immediate steps to ensure that all young people in South Africa have easy access to condoms and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education in schools. Failure to do this will make a mockery of government's efforts to reduce infection rates in young women and girls.

These are our demands. We look forward to your responses. We look forward to unity in action. We call on all to return to South Africa for the International AIDS Conference in 2030 to assess whether we kept our promise to Nelson Mandela and to measure whether we have all lived up to one of the greatest challenges of humanity.

United we stand! Divided we fall!
