



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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**GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 71TH SESSION
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT ON HIV/AIDS AND THE
POLITICAL DECLARATION ON HIV/AIDS**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President

For over three decades the HIV/AIDS epidemic has caused immense suffering throughout the world and has had a devastating impact on development and human rights. Although the progress that has been made is promising, the epidemic continues to outdo our response as we risk failing to realize universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support for people affected by HIV/AIDS. As recent as in 2015 we agreed to fast-tracking our response by increasing and front-loading investments and massively scaling up coverage of HIV services, so as to reduce the rate of new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths. Our efforts are undermined by a number of national and international barriers, including legal, financial, social and cultural ones. Also in 2015, we committed ourselves to ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 in the 2030 Agenda. Only a comprehensive strategy that addresses all dimensions of this complex phenomenon will enable us to deliver on our commitments.

Mr. President

HIV/AIDS has a health, a sustainable development and a human rights dimension. It is encouraging that a number of countries have positively contributed to de-stigmatizing people affected by HIV/AIDS, for example by lifting related travel and residence restrictions or ending criminalization of HIV transmission. Simultaneously, we are alarmed about the continuing legal and factual discrimination in many countries. The fact that homosexuality is still criminalized in almost 80 countries remains an obstacle to effectively addressing the epidemic. Economic and social marginalization of groups at higher risk of HIV infection, such as people who inject drugs, sex workers, prisoners, transgender people and men who have sex with men, often prevent them from fully enjoying their fundamental freedoms and human rights, above all the right to health. A suitable response to HIV/AIDS must necessarily address and fully recognize all fundamental elements of HIV risks and vulnerabilities. Women and girls are still disproportionately vulnerable to the epidemic and their particular situation must be taken into account. In this context, granting them access to sexual and reproductive rights and health services has proven successful in preventing HIV/AIDS and contributes especially to the elimination of mother-to-child transmission. However, neither the recognition of their rights

nor the availability of health services is universal. National and international policies should thus further focus on reducing disenfranchisement and marginalization, as well as on the empowerment of women and girls.

In addition, our global commitments are not consistently translated into additional investment and action on the ground. Financing for the response has decreased and progress on reducing HIV infections among adults has slowed. The headway made on the first “90”, ensuring that 90% of all people living with HIV know their status, of the UNAIDS 90-90-90 initiative is limited and threatens to reduce progress across the continuum of HIV testing and treatment services. Innovative tools and strategies, such as community based HIV testing models, HIV self-testing and viral load testing, are underutilized.

Mr. President,

To conclude, let me express our full support for the recommendations made by the SG in his latest report and commend UNAIDS on their tireless work to translate our commitments in the 2015 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, the 2030 Agenda and other documents into reality. It is of the utmost importance to further increase political will and investment, both domestically and internationally in order to maintain the momentum. Liechtenstein remains committed to this endeavor, both politically and financially. We will continue to support HIV/AIDS related projects by UNICEF, the Global Fund and others, with a priority on prevention and vulnerable groups, especially children and young people. We cannot stress the importance on HIV prevention enough, especially by increasing knowledge about HIV/AIDS starting at an early age, as we believe it to be the basis for a long-term strategy with sustainable results.

I thank you.