

**73rd UNGA
Agenda Item: 11**

**Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and
The Political Declarations on HIV/AIDS**

**India Statement
By
Ms. Paulomi Tripathi
First Secretary**

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Mr. President,

1. We thank the President of General Assembly for convening this plenary meeting on HIV/AIDS.
2. We thank the Secretary General for his report, providing an insightful and informative update on the global fight against HIV/ AIDS.
3. Remarkable progress has been made in fight against HIV/ AIDS epidemic. However, significant challenges remain in our way towards eliminating HIV/ AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.
4. Targeted, evidence-based strategies at national and sub national levels are key to achieving the global fast track treatment target of 90:90:90 by 2020. Ensuring uninterrupted access of affordable antiretroviral drugs and quality care, as well as adherence to treatment through support services, is necessary to combat drug resistance.
5. Continued political commitment must ensure that competing financing demands and changing priorities at international and domestic levels should not divert attention from adequately financing efforts to combat HIV/ AIDS.

Mr. President,

6. India is contributing in the international fight against AIDS almost two-thirds of the antiretroviral drugs used globally are supplied by the Indian pharmaceutical industry. These affordable generic medicines have helped scale up access to treatment across developing countries.
7. In the context of HIV/ AIDS response within the country, India is now building on lessons learnt of past decades to tackle the 'last mile' challenges. The focus is on reduction in new infection, elimination of mother to child transmission and elimination of stigma and discrimination by 2020.

8. There has been more than 80% decline in estimated new infection in India from peak of epidemic in 1995. Similarly, estimated HIV/AIDS related deaths have declined by 71% since its peak in 2005.

9. There is an 84 per cent reduction in tuberculosis deaths among people living with HIV in India by 2017, three years ahead of the 2020 deadline.

10. More than 40 million HIV testing is being done every year at around 30,000 facilities across the country, including 22.5 million for pregnant women.

11. Progress has been possible due to involvement of the communities, civil society and people living with HIV in policy and delivery of services and through intensified information, education and communication drive.

Mr. President,

12. To enhance response towards 2030 targets, India has revamped the prevention and 'Targeted Intervention' strategy through strengthening outreach activities, biomedical waste management, community-based screening and providing peer navigation services.

13. The Government has adopted "Test and Treat" and Viral Load Testing policies to provide comprehensive free care, support and treatment. Around 1.3 million people are availing free treatment and support services under these initiatives. Viral-load monitoring of all people living with HIV has been ramped up reduce transmission and mortality.

14. Measures are planned to identify the common causes of death among people living with HIV/ AIDS and to base interventions for preventing HIV/AIDS related deaths.

15. A landmark HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act has come into force from September 10, 2018. It provides a rights-based framework to ensure a dignified life without stigma and discrimination for people living with HIV.

16. This Act is a milestone. It empowers a person living with HIV to report discrimination in fields of employment, health care services, educational services, public facilities, property rights, holding public office, and insurance.

17. The Act penalizes "propagation of hatred" against the protected persons. It makes it necessary to get informed consent for undertaking HIV tests, medical treatment and research.

18. The legislation has provisions to safeguard the property rights of HIV positive people. Every HIV infected person below the age of 18 years has the right to reside in a shared household and enjoy the facilities of the same.

19. The law makes it mandatory for the government to appoint an ombudsperson to inquire into complaints related to the violation of the Act.

Mr. President,

20. Significant advances have been made in understanding, treatment, and prevention of HIV / AIDS globally. The UN system has played crucial role in sustaining the momentum and supporting national efforts in HIV/ AIDS response.

21. It is time to focus on future challenges and invigorate research in key areas including better diagnosis to identify maximum number of HIV-infected persons and expanding ART coverage, developing vaccine and new treatments to alleviate the need for lifelong ART and finally, preventing new cases of HIV infection.

22. International commitments in capacity building, research and development as well as sustained financing for developing robust and affordable healthcare systems in developing countries will help fast-track the efforts to achieve the global targets for HIV/ AIDS.

I thank you, Mr. President.