

## Side Event to the United Nations High-Level Meeting on Ending AIDS

### Faith2EndAIDS

Monday 7 June 2021

7:00-8:30 am San Francisco / 10:00-11:30 am New York / 2:00-3:30 pm Dakar /  
4:00-5:30 pm Geneva / 5:00-6:30 pm Nairobi / 7:30-9:00 pm Mumbai /  
9:00-10:30 pm Bangkok

#### Background

The High-Level Meeting (HLM) on Ending AIDS will be held from 8 to 10 June 2021. It will focus the attention of UN Member States and the international community on the importance of accelerating the response to HIV over the next five years. The High-Level Meeting is expected to adopt a new Political Declaration on Ending AIDS which will identify actions and commitments to fast-track the HIV response towards ending AIDS as a public health threat. The Declaration is also expected to emphasize the links between HIV and AIDS and other health and development issues, in a time where the Covid-19 pandemic is reinforcing and highlighting pre-existing health needs and inequalities all over the world, as well as impacting decades of progress towards the implementation of Universal Health Coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, the High-Level Meeting comes at a historic moment for the AIDS response: 40 years after the emergence of the first cases of HIV and 25 years since the creation of UNAIDS.

This HLM creates an opportunity to ensure that the world recommits to a better coordinated, more effective and sustainable HIV response. The current situation of the HIV epidemic, hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic, demands an urgent global response, and faith leaders and communities are critical elements of that response. In this context, it is crucial that all sectors, including the faith sector, endorse the new Political Declaration, and then engage in supporting its implementation.

#### Objectives:

It is increasingly recognized that key gaps towards ending AIDS can be addressed by leveraging some of the unique interventions and compassion of faith-based organizations and communities in partnerships with other sectors. Indeed, faith leaders can provide critical leadership in realizing a new vision that makes ending AIDS a reality for their people and their countries, including by contributing to address stigma and discrimination. In addition, faith communities and faith-health care providers are well placed to help expand access to HIV services.

This side event is organized by the UNAIDS-PEPFAR Faith Initiative with faith communities and groups with the purpose to:

- Provide faith leaders and representatives of FBOs and communities with a clear sense of the main areas of action that will emerge from the UN High-Level Meeting outcome document.
- Identify key actions through which faith leaders, communities and groups can fast-track the HIV response.
- Engage FBOs and faith leaders in the 12Million Campaign by committing to key actions that could promote access to HIV services for the 12 million children, women, men, and people from key population groups, who are living with HIV and are still not on quality and consistent HIV treatment, care and support.
- Share lessons learned by FBOs and faith communities to address stigma and discrimination; promote human rights; and increase access to HIV services.
- Exchange views on ways to strengthen the collaboration among different faiths as well as among faiths and other sectors.

**Format:**

The event will take the form of a panel session followed by an interactive debate among representatives of faith groups, governments' officials, parliamentarians, senior UN and international organization officials, leading civil society representatives, including of networks of people living with HIV - etc. Lead discussants will form a panel with moderators (Faith Leader + government representative) to stimulate the discussion.

**Agenda:**

**Moderator** – Rev. Dionne P. Boissiere, Chaplain, the Church Center to the United Nations

**Welcome and opening remarks**

- Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director, UNAIDS
- Angeli Achrekar, Acting U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, PEPFAR

**Key addresses:**

- Reverend Canon Dr Rosemary Mbogo, Provincial Secretary of the Anglican Church of Kenya, on behalf of the Government of Kenya
- H.E. Ambassador Neville Melvin Gertze, Permanent Representative of Namibia to the UN

**Session 1 – Setting the Scene**

- Ahmed Abbadi, Secretary General of the la Rabita Mohammadia of Oulemas, Kingdom of Morocco: Key actions through which Muslim faith leaders, communities and groups can fast-track the HIV response
- Francesca Merico, UNAIDS-PEPFAR Faith Initiative: Engaging faith groups in the implementation of the Political Declaration

**Lessons Learned:**

During this session, FBOs will share promising practices and lessons learned to address stigma and discrimination; promote human rights; and increase access to HIV services:

- Fr Richard W. Bauer, MM, BCC, LCSW, Director of Spiritual and Psychosocial Care, EDARP: Reaching men and key populations through HIVST in faith communities & successful models to increase case identification and VL suppression in children
- Prof Mohamed Karama, PhD Public Health and Epidemiology, Muslim Policy on HIV, Islamic Relief: Ensuring access to HIV services to migrants and refugees while addressing sexual and gender-based violence

**Discussion** – purpose: identify key actions to support the implementation of the 2021 Political Declaration, including through the 12Million Campaign

**Closing and way forward**

- Sandy Thurman, Chief Strategy Officer, Office of the US Global AIDS Coordinator and Health Diplomacy, US Department of State
- Laurel Sprague, Chief, Community Mobilization, Department of Gender, Human Rights and Community Engagement, UNAIDS

**Participation:** Representatives of people living with HIV networks, faith leaders, representatives of FBOs and communities of faith, CSOs, governments, UN agencies, international organizations and academia.

**Languages:** The meeting will be held in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

**Link:** It will be shared through the [Interfaith Health Platform](#)