



Parliamentary Caucus on the occasion of the United Nations High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS

Thursday, 1 June 2006, Room 6,
United Nations Secretariat Building, New York

PROGRAMME

2 p.m. Welcome and introductory remarks:

Senator Margaret Mensah-Williams, Vice-President of the IPU Executive Committee, Vice-Chairperson of the National Council of Namibia

Mr. Michel Sidibe, Director of Country and Regional Support, UNAIDS, will present an overview of key issues from the High Level Meeting and review the role of parliaments in advancing implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and national responses to AIDS.

Ms. Kathleen Cravero-Kristofersson, Assistant Administrator, UNDP, will act as moderator.

2:10 p.m. Bridging the gap between legislation and practice

Many countries have made significant advances in adopting laws to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, including legislation to protect the rights of people living with HIV. However, adoption of laws is not in itself sufficient to address the needs of people affected by AIDS.

Related questions:

- How to ensure that laws are applied effectively, consistently and fairly?
- How can budgetary expenditures be allocated to improve implementation of laws?
- How can human rights set down in law be enforced?
- How can donor funding be allocated most effectively?

Presenter: Dr. Ewa Björling, Member of Parliament, Sweden (5 minutes).

Discussant: Mr. Marcel van Soest, Executive Director, World AIDS Campaign (2 minutes)

2:50 p.m. Building partnerships with civil society for more effective implementation

National policies and laws can not be effectively applied unless they are worked out in partnership with civil society stakeholders and fully understood and accepted by them. This is particularly important in the case of HIV/AIDS, given that civil society groups have been at the forefront of the response to AIDS from national to community levels, in all regions. Parliamentarians, as representatives of the people, have a duty to ensure that civil society is fully involved in policy-making and implementation.

Related questions:

- How can parliaments build effective dialogue with civil society?
- How can civil society partner with parliamentarians to inform legislation so that it reflects the interests of the people most directly affected?
- How can parliamentarians work with civil society organizations (including media, unions, and private enterprises), to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS?

Presenter: Dr. José Aristodemo Pinotti, MP, Brazil (5 minutes)

Discussant: Mr. Marcel van Soest, Executive Director, World AIDS Campaign (2 minutes)

3:30 p.m. Discussion of follow-up to the meeting.

Possible establishment of an IPU advisory group to build parliamentary support for HIV/AIDS campaigns and advance the 2001 Declaration of Commitment

3:55 p.m. Summary remarks by Dr. Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS



**Parliamentary Caucus on the occasion of the
United Nations High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS**

1 June 2006, New York

Registration form to be returned duly filled out to:

Office of the IPU Permanent Observer to the United Nations (New York, USA)

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Country:

PLEASE PRINT

Mr./Ms.	First Name	Family Name	Parliamentary Function ¹

FOR ACCOMPANYING STAFF ONLY

(Personal assistants, secretaries, press officers, interpreters and others)

Mr./Ms.	First Name	Family Name	Job Title

¹ Please specify if you are an MP or Senator, as well as membership of parliamentary committees or other parliamentary appointments. Please list the Head of IPU Delegation first.

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Geneva, 6 April 2006

**Parliamentary Caucus on the occasion of the
United Nations High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS
(New York, 31 May - 2 June)**

Thursday, 1 June

Dear Madam President,
Dear Mr. President,

HIV/AIDS is a concern for every nation. There have been increasing calls for the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to engage more in efforts to control the pandemic. In that respect, I would like to draw your attention to a parliamentary meeting to be held at United Nations Headquarters on 1 June.

The High-level Meeting of the United Nations will take stock of implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS of 2001. The event will bring together the main stakeholders involved with the HIV pandemic: government representatives, parliamentarians, civil society, the private sector, youth and labour.

The IPU's commitment to this issue is growing. It is hoped that members of parliament can join their national delegations at the June meeting to take part in the plenary sessions, roundtables and panel discussions. The UN Meeting will also provide an opportunity for members of parliament to exchange experiences and prepare for the future in the fight against the disease.

The IPU, UNAIDS and UNDP are convening a **Parliamentary Caucus on Thursday, 1 June, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. (Room 6)**, to which all members of parliament attending the United Nations High-level Meeting are warmly invited. The purpose of the event is to bring together the parliamentary community around the issue of HIV/AIDS. Dr. Peter Piot, the Executive Director of UNAIDS, will open the meeting. It is hoped that the UNDP Administrator, Mr. Kemal Dervis, will also attend.

I hope that you will bring this information to the attention of parliamentarians who are working on HIV/AIDS in Parliament, and encourage them to attend both the United Nations High-level meeting and the Parliamentary Caucus on 1 June. A more detailed programme for the meeting will be sent to you in the coming weeks together with the latest substantive reports of the UN Secretary-General. I enclose a registration form for members of parliament to inform our IPU Office in New York of their intention to attend, and an information note.

Yours sincerely,

Anders B. Johnsson
Secretary General

INFORMATION NOTE

United Nations High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS: Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS

In June 2001, Heads of State and Government met at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session dedicated to HIV/AIDS. The meeting was a major milestone in the AIDS response. The participants issued the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, which remains a powerful tool that is helping to guide and secure action, commitment, support and resources for the AIDS response.

The 2006 follow-up meeting will take place from 31 May – 2 June at the United Nations in New York. This year, the UN Secretary-General will present a report to the General Assembly on progress made until the end of 2005, a year when targets in the Declaration are due. The main focus of the meeting is to review progress achieved in realizing the commitments set out in the Declaration of Commitment.

The meeting will involve all sectors of the international community, governments, civil society and the private sector. It will feature a series of panel discussions as well as roundtables covering diverse topics. Building on these discussions, a high level meeting will take place on the third day, culminating in the adoption of a political declaration aimed at reaffirming and expressing recommitment to the full implementation of the Declaration in the coming years.

IPU and HIV/AIDS

All forces are needed in the fight to control the AIDS pandemic, and parliaments are viewed as a partner with a vital contribution to make to this crucial cause. The IPU has debated resolutions concerning HIV/AIDS at its statutory conferences going as far back as the 87th Inter-Parliamentary Conference in 1992. At its 112th Assembly in Manila in April 2005, the IPU adopted a comprehensive resolution on human rights and HIV/AIDS which won wide approval and triggered a round table discussion in New York the following September, jointly convened by IPU, UNAIDS and UNDP. The purpose of the round table was to secure greater involvement of parliaments in the struggle to control HIV/AIDS.

At its 114th Assembly in Nairobi in May, HIV/AIDS will once again be on the agenda. This time the IPU will partner with UNICEF in a panel discussion to examine the plight of AIDS orphans, particularly in Africa. The meeting in New York two weeks after the Nairobi Assembly is intended to bring a strong political focus to the involvement of legislators in AIDS control, as part of the wider United Nations events.

The June 2006 meeting will

- Examine the political messages emanating from the UN High-level Meeting;
- Exchange experiences on successful parliamentary initiatives to advance the HIV/AIDS agenda;
- Draw attention to advocacy strategies for parliamentarians, including ways to work with civil society and private sector partners, and identify follow-up actions