



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Side event to the United Nations High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS

The role of parliaments in addressing inequalities to end AIDS by 2030

7 June 2021

9:00 – 10:30 EDT (New York), 15:00 – 16:30 CEST (Geneva)

Concept note

A United Nations High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS will be convened on 8-10 June 2021 to review progress towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 and guide the HIV/AIDS response beyond 2021. It will provide an opportunity to mobilize political commitment and ensure that COVID-19 recovery applies the lessons learned from the colliding epidemics of HIV and COVID-19 to create more resilient societies. The United Nations General Assembly adopted modalities for the High-Level Meeting, which specifically invite the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to contribute. The IPU Governing Council is expected to adopt a statement to provide a parliamentary contribution to the meeting.

Forty years since the first cases were identified, AIDS remains an urgent global crisis and most countries are not on track to end AIDS by 2030, the target set by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2019, 38 million people globally were living with HIV and more than 12 million people still did not have access to HIV treatment. Stigma, discrimination and underlying inequalities, including gender, structural, legal and economic inequalities, continue to fuel the HIV epidemic, marginalize and criminalize communities, and restrict access to health, education and other essential services. Women and girls in sub-Saharan Africa and key populations continue to be disproportionately affected by the HIV epidemic. The COVID-19 pandemic is further threatening the gains already made; modelling of the pandemic's long-term impact on the HIV response shows a setback with an estimated 123,000 to 293,000 additional new HIV infections and 69,000 to 148,000 additional AIDS-related deaths between 2020 and 2022.

Where parliaments and parliamentarians are effectively engaged in the AIDS response, they can provide critical leadership in realizing a new vision that makes the end of AIDS a reality by building public awareness and acting in the interest of people living with HIV and key populations; amending laws that undermine access to HIV and health services and criminalize HIV transmission while enacting laws that promote the right to health and protect against stigma and discrimination; and using oversight and budgetary powers to enable effective prioritization and more efficient allocation of resources for HIV and health.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is convening a side event in collaboration with UNAIDS to discuss the new Global AIDS Strategy 2021-2026 and the main lines of action that will emerge from the High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS. The event will address the following questions:

- What are the core goals of the new Global AIDS Strategy and how can parliaments contribute to their achievement and ensure adequate investment in HIV and health?
- How are inequalities driving the HIV epidemic? What is the impact of law on the HIV response and how can legislation support the commitments emerging from the High-Level Meeting to end AIDS by 2030?
- What lessons can be drawn from the colliding HIV epidemic and COVID-19 pandemic and how can parliaments ensure that COVID-19 response and recovery plans support the HIV response?

The event will take place virtually and will be open to all interested parliamentarians and parliamentary staff as well as other stakeholders involved in the HIV response. The working languages will be English, French and Spanish (simultaneous interpretation).