

UNAIDS Statement
69th session the Executive Committee of UNHCR (1-5 October 2018)

Madam Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you very much for this opportunity and I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS, UNAIDS.

UNHCR is a critical cosponsor and the lead conveying agency along with WFP for HIV in humanitarian situations, in the UNAIDS Joint Programme. As illustrated in the 2017 UNHCR Public Health Annual global overview, UNHCR has, thanks to the UNAIDS JP funding, supported 16 UNHCR country operations to address gaps in HIV, reproductive health and gender-based violence programming; such as, ART treatment in Malaysia, HIV prevention programmes in Pakistan, and in Rwanda, over 17,000 refugees received HIV counseling and testing. Since becoming a cosponsor in 2004, UNHCR has made commendable strides to integrate HIV into its broader health and protection mandate. Significant progress has also been made in removing legal and policy barriers for refugees and asylum seekers living with HIV.

We are particularly pleased to commend UNHCR for its chairing of the UNAIDS Committee of the Cosponsoring Organizations, or CCO, throughout a dynamic year in 2018. Critical achievements have thus been made; including the 'Integrated approach' for a more effective and coherent UN support to Member States response to HIV and AIDS, and a reinforced policy on the prevention of and response to harassment in the workplace. Through this Integrated approach, the Joint Programme has shifted its operating model focus to the country-level, and the funding for the Joint Programme support is provided through joint country envelopes, under the lead of the UNRC. As CCO Chair, UNHCR also oversaw the finalization of the renewed UNAIDS Division of Labour, which further improves the delineation of responsibilities of the cosponsors in our constantly-changing global environment.

We are grateful to the High Commissioner, Mr Filippo Grandi for his continued commitment to addressing the AIDS response as a core responsibility within UNHCR's operations. Under the UNHCR Chair, the UNAIDS joint Programme is making great strides to support Member States progress towards the common goal of ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030 as part of the SDGs.

But this progress is incomplete, fragile and potentially reversible.

While fewer than 1 million people died from AIDS-related illnesses in 2017 and more than 21 million people living with HIV are now on treatment, and with many countries in Eastern and Southern Africa and Western Europe achieving the 90-90-90 treatment targets, other regions are seeing much slower progress or even reversal in the gains made.

Latest numbers from UNAIDS' Miles to Go report show that we have a real HIV prevention crisis. Infection rates remain stubbornly high. Around 1.8 million people became newly

infected with HIV in 2017 and around 50 countries experienced a rise in new HIV infections. The report also reveals the alarming challenges faced by refugees and other displaced populations as well as mobile populations. For instance, migrants in Europe with HIV–tuberculosis coinfection were especially prone to treatment failure, drug-resistant tuberculosis and premature death.

Against the global financial constraints, we continue making efforts for savings and cost-efficiencies, and we know that the current Joint Programme funding of \$180m against a \$242m budget is jeopardizing progress. We also want to acknowledge the cosponsor efforts to mitigate the effects of a 50% funding reduction from the core UNAIDS Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (or UBRAF) budget, but this is endangering global progress. Therefore, we need Member states to do more to support UNHCR’s AIDS-related work.

Madam Chair,

UNAIDS is proud to continue being a unique United Nations instrument, and a model of UN reform as recognized by the ECOSOC, and that supports the Member States efforts to bring an end to AIDS and to achieve the SDGs with a people and country-centered approach, and through joint cosponsor collaboration.

Yet, AIDS is not over and far from it.

We are thus at a pivotal stage where the ending of AIDS by 2030 can still become a reality and contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, BUT to achieve this, the collaboration between the HIV, health, human rights and humanitarian sectors, which UNHCR is leading in the UNAIDS JP, is essential, NOW more than ever.

Thank you for your attention.

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