

Statement on behalf of the Executive Director, UNAIDS

UN Habitat Governing Council, 8-12 May 2017

I bring you the warm greetings of the UNAIDS Executive Director, Michel Sidibe. UNAIDS wishes to congratulate UN-Habitat on the occasion of the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council and would like to thank the President for the opportunity to highlight issues related to AIDS, as part of the New UN Urban Agenda. The Agenda calls for the end of the AIDS epidemic to be embedded as a principle and commitment for all cities; for action to ensure equal rights and opportunities; for providing equal access to basic health and social services; and to ensure that no-one is left behind in the HIV response.

In 2014 UNAIDS joined with UN-Habitat, the City of Paris, the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care (IAPAC), and 26 cities from around the world to launch the Paris Declaration on Fast-Track Cities Ending the AIDS epidemic. To date, more than 200 cities have signed the Paris Declaration and have pledged their commitment to ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030, and to addressing disparities in access to basic services, social justice and economic opportunities. Leaders in these cities have recognized that their strategies for responding to the AIDS epidemic offer a platform for transformation that promotes social inclusion, protection, safety and health.

Indeed, cities play a critical role in accelerating the HIV response and actions taken in cities will to a large extent determine national and global success in ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030. Cities account for large and growing proportions of people living with HIV and tuberculosis (TB). In addition, the risk and vulnerability to HIV and TB infection is often higher in urban settings because of the urban dynamics such as social networking, migration, unemployment, overcrowding, poverty and social and economic inequalities. Key populations are often concentrated in cities where the vibrancy and anonymity provide increased opportunities for high risk behaviours. This is especially true for the informal slum settlements.

At the same time, cities offer important opportunities and have inherent advantages in accelerating the response to HIV, and in taking transformative action that ensures services are delivered to all its citizens. Cities often have regulatory powers, have large infrastructure through which large numbers of people can be reached, and are centres for economic growth, education, innovation, positive social change and sustainable development.

Integrating the AIDS response into the Sustainable Development Agenda, to Fast Track the Ending of AIDS by 2030, presents opportunities to respond more effectively, not only to HIV and TB, but also to other communicable and non-communicable diseases while addressing many of the associated social problems. A successful AIDS response requires a unified approach: involving key partners across health and social sectors, reaching marginalized populations and informal settlements, and supporting the basic health and social needs of all people living with and affected by HIV. Poverty, violence, inequality, punitive laws and discriminatory social norms all play a role in fuelling the HIV and TB epidemics and in creating inequities in access to health care, education, housing and economic opportunity. By integrating these and other contextual factors associated with HIV, city leaders can take a multi-sectoral approach to tackling and transforming some of the most intractable social problems. Equity, inclusiveness, resilience and

sustainability are not only central to a successful health care strategy but they form the basis for creating a healthy and sustainable future.

I wish to close by reiterating that UNAIDS is committed to working with Member States and UN-Habitat on the Fast-Track Cities Initiative, as part of the Sustainable Development Goals, to ensure health and social justice for all people at risk of and living with HIV in urban settings.

I wish to thank you for your attention.