



STATEMENTS SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF GLOBAL HEALTH COUNCIL (GHC) TO THE SIXTY-EIGHTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

Meeting:

Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly (A68/1)

Agenda Item:

14.1 Monitoring the achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals

Statement:

Chairperson, Honorable Ministers, distinguished delegates, colleagues:

Thank you for the opportunity to deliver this statement on behalf of Global Health Council and the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation

The health-related MDGs report by the Secretary General rightly notes significant progress on MDG 6 on HIV/AIDS. However, we would caution against declaring that “the epidemics of HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis have been halted,” as the report affirms in paragraph 2.

It is true that some countries have reached the tipping point on HIV, where more people are being initiated on treatment than newly infected. But we are at a very delicate point in the epidemic, and overstating progress could lead to a decrease in funding and programmatic efforts that will inevitably result in a rebounding of new HIV infections and an increase in mortality. If efforts are reduced, countries that have reached the treatment tipping point could easily backslide to where new infections outpace the response. Indeed, ending the epidemic as a public health threat by 2030 will require significantly more resources.

Moreover, not all populations are seeing equal progress, which is not reflected in the MDG report. Young children and adolescents, especially girls, bear a particularly heavy burden of the epidemic. Only 24% of children are on antiretroviral therapy, one-third less than adults. Almost 700 children are newly infected with HIV every day, and 80% will die by their fifth birthday without ART. HIV/AIDS remains the primary cause of death among adolescents in Africa. While global deaths from AIDS are declining for all other age groups, they are still increasing for adolescents. Young women and girls make up a disproportionately high percentage of people living with HIV and of new infections in sub-Saharan Africa.

In closing, we encourage WHA delegates to intensify action on HIV/AIDS, especially regarding those left behind such as children, adolescents, and young women.

Thank you.