

**2007 HIV/AIDS Implementers Meeting:
Opening Remarks
PEPFAR, The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis
And Malaria, UNAIDS, UNICEF, The World Bank, WHO, GNP+
June 16, 2007**

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[START RECORDING]

FEMALE SPEAKER: Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Rwanda, and Madam the First Lady. Your Excellency, the President of the Senate. Your Excellency, the President of the Chamber of Deputies. Right Honorable Prime Minister. Your Excellency, the President of the Supreme Court. Honorable Ministers, and members of the Cabinet of the Republic of Rwanda, as well as, visiting Ministers. Her worship the Mayor. Ambassador Dybul, the United States Global AIDS Coordinator. Michel Kazatchkine, the Executive Director of the Global Fund. Michel Sidibe, Deputy Executive Director of UNAIDS. Elizabeth Mataka [misspelled?], the Vice Chair of the Global Fund, and the UN Secretary Generals Special Envoy for HIV AIDS in Africa. Honorable members of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. Members of the Diplomatic Corp, and heads of International Organizations, and representatives of the force Forces of this meeting UNICEF and Blue H All [misspelled?]. Representatives of people living with HIV AIDS. Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, all protiful [misspelled?] observed.

As Master of Ceremonies for this opening session, I wish to welcome you all to this 2007 HIV/AIDS Implementers Conference. Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

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allow me to recognize and thank, his Excellency, the President of the Republic of Rwanda, for honoring the meeting with his presence in spite of his heavy state schedule.

[Applause]

This and as close his commitment to the efforts against HIV/AIDS. I wish to particularly welcome to our country of visitors from all over the world who came to attend this meeting. We have with us delegates from 51 countries across, almost, all the continents. We have about 137 delegates from Asia. Can you please stand up to be acknowledged, delegates from Asia? We have about 110 from Europe, if you can please stand up too. From Europe including those who are watching in the Geneva, even though you are African.

And we have about 350 from North America, if you can please stand up to be acknowledged. About 57 from Latin America, and the Caribbean. And then, over 700 from Africa, excluding the Randeas [misspelled?] this time. Thank you.

During this meeting, which is the first of its kind, that brings together the all the international partners. Lessons learned in the skill of HIV/AIDS programs will be shared with a view of improving the quality and impact.

Your Excellency, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, a brief word about this morning's program. We shall begin

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with a word from Ambassador Dybul, the United States Global AIDS Coordinator, and this would be followed shortly by a word from Françoise Welter, the policy coordinator of the Global Network of people living with HIV/AIDS. We will then have a word from Michel Sidibe, the Deputy Executive Director of UNAIDS, followed by a word from Michel Kazatchkine, the Executive Director of the Global Fund.

We will then ask the Honorable Minister of State, in charge of HIV/AIDS and other epidemics to invite his Excellency, the President of the Republic of Rwanda to officially open this meeting.

At this point, may we invite Ambassador Dybul to give his opening remarks? Ambassador Dybul is, as I said, the United States Global AIDS Coordinator leading the implementation of President Bush and Majesty plan for AIDS relief.

Prior to this year, he held the positions of Deputy US Global AIDS Coordinator, and Assistant US Global AIDS Coordinator. Before coming to the coordinators office, Ambassador Dybul served on the planning task force for the Majesty plan, and was the lead for President Bush International Prevention of Mother and Child HIV Initiative in the Department of Health and Human Services. Ambassador Dybul, please. [Applause]

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MARK DYBUL, M.D.: Good morning. On behalf of my distinguished co-chair, the Honorable Minister of State of the Republic of Rwanda, Dr. Inasau [misspelled?], and all of the co-sponsors. Welcome to the 2007 HIV Implementers Meeting.

We all begin by offering a deep thanks to the government and people of the Republic of Rwanda. His Excellency, President Kagame, has provided inspiring leadership in the nations fight against HIV/AIDS.

Rwanda is a global leader in the global fight. A model of commitment to multi-sectorial approach drawing upon the strengths of government and non-governmental organizations including civil society, faith based organizations, and the private sector. You are a living example of the power of partnerships and of this meetings theme, Scaling up through Partnerships.

It is so wonderful to be here, and we could not have better place for the first Implementers Meeting to highlight your leadership and your success. [Applause]

President and Mrs. Kagame, distinguished and honorable members of the Government of the Republic of Rwanda representing the people of Rwanda.

Thank you for your warm hospitality, and even more, for your commitment to building an AIDS free generation here

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in Africa. Thanks to the many distinguished implementers here today, from all walks of life who are turning the tide against global HIV/AIDS.

I'd like to pay special tribute to the members of the global network of people living with HIV/AIDS. You are the heart and soul of the world's effort to confront this disease. Often at great personal cost, you are working so that others will not suffer. Thank you for your commitment and thank you for your courage. [Applause]

We are joined by Ministers of Health and the diplomatic corp from countries that are making great progress in confronting their own epidemics. Thank you for being here, and we are privileged that this year, for the first time key international partners are co-sponsoring the meeting. The Global Fund, UNAIDS, UNICEF, the World Bank, and the World Health Organization. I'm very privileged to share the podium with Dr. Michel Kazatchkine, the Executive Director of the Fund, and Dr. Sidibe from UNAIDS speaking on behalf of Dr. Pia [misspelled?].

To all co-sponsors, we are grateful for your partnership in this meeting, and for your partnership in the field. This meeting is an opportunity to share lessons learned. To disseminate best practices, so we can improve our programs in real time.

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It is about saving lives as quickly as possible. There is no time to lose. Those of you know here, and all too well, and all too personally we still have a long way to go in this fight. Thousands of our friends, family members, and fellow citizens die of this preventable and treatable disease everyday. But even as we acknowledge that the stark realities of the epidemic, we are inspired by the progress that you have made over the last few years. Individuals, communities, and nations are taking ownership of their lives, and are beginning to turn the tide against this pandemic.

Young men and women are choosing behaviors that protect them against infection to reduce their risk, or to reduce their risk of acquiring it. When accurate information is provided personal responsibility is taking hold.

We have an important new prevention tool in medical male circumcision, and are knowledge based about behavior change continues to expand. We have dramatically expanded programs to care for millions of orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV. And perhaps most impressively, as of December, more than 2 million people in the developing world were receiving antiretroviral treatment, a 20-fold increase in just four years.

When we selected the dates for this meeting we did not know that it would follow to the most important weeks in

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the history of the global fight against HIV/AIDS, and more broadly in the history of global health.

On May 30th^h, President Bush proposed a doubling of the initial \$15 billion commitment of the historic Presidents Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, which was already the largest international health initiative in history dedicated to a specific disease. And he asked Congress to provide an additional \$30 billion in funding for another five years. And if Congress meets the Presidents request, the total US commitment to Global AIDS over a ten-year period, will be an unprecedented, more than \$48 billion. [Applause]

Last week the news got even better. Challenged by President Bush's commitment, the G8 Leaders committed to \$60 billion to combat these diseases. And just as importantly, there was a commitment to support country owned national programs to meet specific numerical goals.

Treatment for 5 million, prevention of 24 million new infections, and care for 24 million people living with HIV, and orphans and vulnerable children. These two landmark events are based squarely on your success in what you all have accomplished in just a few short years.

President Kagame, the success of Rwanda, and of other countries, and moving rapidly to save lives, led directly to those announcements.

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In a broader sense, these commitments are based in faith and hope. Hope for, and faith in, the dedicated and talented people of the many countries in which we are so privileged to work. People who commit their lives everyday, to the service of others of their country men and women. Giving of themselves for others.

Hope for, and faith in a better tomorrow, for people living everyday with the ravages of this pandemic. Those living with HIV infection, and those who care for and bury loved ones, those orphaned by HIV/AIDS.

Fundamentally, the commitments made by President Bush and the G8 leaders are part of a broader vision for development based on the hope for and faith in all of you, in people.

We are rejecting the old and flawed donor recipient approach and replacing it with partnership. Partnership is rooted in hope for and faith in people. Partnership means honest relationships between equals, based in mutual respect, understanding, and trust with obligations and responsibilities for each partner.

While there's been much success, much remains to be done. And now we have breath taking new commitments to help get it done. So let us here today, rededicate ourselves, to serving our global sisters and brothers in need.

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Let us rededicate ourselves, to the proposition so beautifully stated by President Bush, "That where you live should not determine if you live or die from HIV/AIDS." Let us rededicate ourselves to transforming the world through the promise of partnerships.

There is no higher calling or nobler goal. Working together, everything is possible. Thank you for being here in Kigali, and thank you for your partnership in one of the most important undertakings in our time. [Applause]

FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you, Ambassador Dybul. And now may we ask Françoise Welter, the Policy Coordinator of the Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS to give her remarks. Françoise has been working in the HIV field for 15 years for the United Nations Development Program, UNAIDS on the Global Front. Françoise please. [Applause]

FRANÇOISE WELTER: Brothers and sisters, good morning. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to be here and share with you, on behalf of my organization, some thoughts on the mainstreaming of GIPA into HIV implementation.

As you all know, GIPA or the Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV and AIDS, is a principal that aims to realize the rights and responsibilities of people living with HIV, including the right to self determination, and

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participation in decision making processes that affect their lives.

In the spirit, GIPA has a critical influence on the quality and effectiveness of National AIDS responses, and there is by now a global agreement that any commitment to universal access to prevention, care and treatment services by 2010, cannot afford to bypass people living with HIV and AIDS, if it has any chance at all of succeeding.

GNP+, my organization, applauds the fact that significant efforts have been made to involve people living with HIV and AIDS in some aspects of the programs of the national responses. However, we must sadly also recognize that up to now, P&HIV involvement has been narrowly focused on a few aspects of the national response.

For instance, putting a face on the epidemic through P&HIV presence in mass media campaigns and testimonials. But even there, these efforts at P&HIV inclusion have not been comprehensive enough. People living with HIV need to be involved in all aspects of prevention, as well as, in every treatment and impact mitigation exercise. Many countries opposed of a great collaboration with civil society in their national responses to the epidemic. But the bitter reality is that, although in some instances civil society might be involved in the planning phase of the response, it's

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definitely absent from the subsequent phases. It's absent when funds are being allocated. It's absent when capacity is being developed and strengthened. It's absent when programs are being implemented, and it's absent when these programs are being monitored and evaluated.

But fortunately for us, this meeting offers a great opportunity for cheaper mainstreaming. It's also an occasion for rejoicing in our combined efforts so far, at least for me. You see, it occurs to me that once in a while life hands you a perfect moment, and for me this moment of me standing here, right now, and meet colleagues and friends that I care about and respect very much, is such a moment. [Applause] So I'm very happy to say, I'm a woman living with HIV and AIDS. I'm proud, and I love my life. [Applause]

But the real heroes of the P&HIV movement are the HIV positive implementers, who are active in their communities. And please permit me to mention some that are here today at this meeting.

Later on, we will hear from a Zimbabwean lawyer who will share her experiences, operational zing GIPA. Around the network of people living with HIV, active and family focus care, will tell us all about innovations in human resources.

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ITPC and Springs of Hope in South Africa will come moderate a workshop on positive leadership. The Kenyan network of positive teachers will share its community partnership success stories. Hensita [misspelled?], of Mozambique will bring us to date on what it means to be active in OVC care and support by people living with HIV. Saso [misspelled?], of Uganda will share with us his experiences in the design and the implementation of quality care services.

Concors Apuru [misspelled?], will tell us about the state of the sexual and reproductive rights of women living with HIV in Kenya. Tenefa [misspelled?] of Tanzania, and Fos Rif [misspelled?], of Haiti will update us on trajectory diagnosis and treatment, as well as, on prevention, care, and support for young people living with HIV.

The Vietnam GIPA program and the India network of people living with HIV, will both share with us their experiences building capacity within their networks.

Mothers to Mothers of South Africa will highlight the challenges and successes of PMTCT programs, and the community health and media trust will teach us about broadcasting positively. I could go on. There are so many more.

Brothers and sisters in arms, getting stronger everyday. But so much more needs to be done. Several

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consortiums on universal access have all agreed that stigma, discrimination, gender disparity, and human rights violations are the major obstacles to each achievement.

And indeed, unless these issues are addressed adequately people living with HIV and AIDS will not operate effectively, and will not be an integral part of the response. Therefore, GMP appeals to every country. To mainstream GIPA into their national plans. To commit to increasing awareness and enforcing of the human rights of the key populations, and to ensure that the current laws will transform the prevailing gender dynamics.

In short, governments everywhere should create an operating environment conducive to people living with HIV's involvement. At the same time, we also appeal to donors everywhere, to please allocate enough funding towards moving GIPA from principal to reality through network capacity building and strengthening.

And finally, GNP+ appeals to the P&HIV movement itself, to renew it's commitment, demonstrate to the necessary initiative and leadership in the fight against HIV, step forward and take its rightful place at the forefront of the global response to the epidemic.

On behalf of GNP+, I would like to welcome you to Rwanda, and to the 2007 HIV Implementers Meeting.

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[Speaking in French] [Applause]

FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Françoise. And now may we invite Michel Sidibe, who is the Assistant Secretary General and Deputy Executive Director of UNAIDS, to give us his remarks. Michel Sidibe joined UNAIDS in 2001, as the director of country and regional support, and since then has served in leading several global AIDS initiatives.

Leading the process to mobilize supporting over 130 countries for scanning of prevention, treatment and care for HIV/AIDS towards universal access. Michel Sidibe please.

[Applause]

MICHEL SIDIBE: Your Excellency, President of Republic of Rwanda and the first lady. Honorable members of the Government. Ms. Elizathbeth Mataka, special envoy on AIDS in Africa. Ms. Sigrun Magedal, Ambassador on AIDS from Norway. Ambassador Mark Dybul, Dr. Michel Kazatchkine, distinguished participant, friends and colleagues.

It is an honor for me to be here today to deliver this speech of Dr. Peter Piot, executive director of UNAIDS.

On behalf of World Bank, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and all the co-sponsor of UNAIDS. It is impressive to look around the room, and see such a wide range of people who work on the frontline of AIDS. Your

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Excellency, it is appropriate to be holding this discussion in Rwanda. [Applause]

Under your leadership, Rwanda has made the some remarkable achievement. Three years ago, some 8,000 people had access to treatment. Today, nearly 40,000 people are on treatment. [Applause]

The progress is the proof of Rwanda's own commitment to defeat AIDS. It is ten years since the World Bank, launch of a military country HIV/AIDS program for Africa. Five years since the global fund was published, and four since the creation of EFFA.

Each of these landmark steps release billion of dollars for AIDS, and their supporting the growing global commitment for defeating one of the major challenges of our time. President Bush proposal last month to increase AIDS funding to \$30 billion, the next five years sends an important signal at a critical juncture.

I would like to that this chance to salute Ambassador Mark Dybul for his leadership at PEPFAR, and thank him for his commitment to work together as a one team. [Applause]

The [inaudible] of Michel Kazatchkine as Executive Director of the Global Fund will certainly lead to a new era in our relationship. Strong cooperation between our two

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organizations is, I believe, one of the cornerstones of an effective global AIDS response.

Friends, colleagues it is time to take stock of what we have done, and what we have achieved. Well over 2 million people in the middle and low-income countries are now on treatment. In several populations in East Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia, HIV infection levels are falling finally. However, in Uganda, Thailand, and Western Europe, infection levels are edging up again.

As a result of the hard won prevention gains of the '90's are being lost. This is disturbing and highlights the urgent needs for more and better HIV prevention programs.

Your Excellency, globally for everyone person who starts on treatment today, another six become infected with HIV. If we don't act now, to make a prevention work better, the cures for treatments will just get longer. And responding to the AIDS will get more expensive and more difficult.

Making prevention work better will require us, also to tackle some tough issues. This includes working out how to deal with the fundamental tabors of the epidemic. Socioeconomic inequalities and the lost statues of woman, HIV related stigma and discrimination, the marginalization of homosexuals, drug users, sex worker, and migrants.

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Meanwhile some critics are saying that too much money is going to AIDS. This is shocking. The truth is that not enough money is going to AIDS, and there is a huge gap between the money that is needed and what is available.

This years funding for the global aids response will be \$8 billion short for the \$18 billion funds required.

At UNAIDS, our number one task is to make the money work for people. So we can come as close as possible to universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and care. But we need to work all together on five different fronts, your Excellency.

First, money must be spent on purities and programs, that are led and owned by national governments and local communities. Where there is a strong national leadership, the results will be greater and more sustainable. Countries must better understand their own epidemic, and what drives it so they can take appropriate action. Second, we must tackle the human resource crisis. This is why UNAIDS has been increasing its focus on building in country technical capacity on HIV.

This involves enhancing capacity not just in health sector, but also in education and social services. It is important to integrate HIV work with other health services. Reproductive health, for example, and increasingly, urgently

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tuberculosis. Community and civil society are an invaluable source of knowledge. But what works and about how to reach people, we must listen and learn from them.

Third, we must move from short term planning cycle to most strategic programming approach. But this can only happen if funding comes in predictable multi-year blocks. So I sincerely hope that the realization of effort will be a campaign by the shift to multi-year allocation. [Applause]

And I am please that the Global Fund can now support the programs, not to just projects. [Applause]

Fourth, we must acknowledge the dangers NAVDT [misspelled?] of normalizing AIDS as a regular development issues. True, AIDS must be at the core of any development and strategy. But it must, also, be treated as a distant and extra ordinary entity. Fifth, we must achieve greater efficiency of scale. This means learning from business, reducing unit costs, and improving procurement and distribution. We must focus more on delivering for reserves, and maintaining top quality standards for service provisions. And we must stop one at getting lost on the way, as is shown in the new report by Accenture and UNAIDS.

Friends I said it earlier, that we all at the crossroads. It points at which we must move into a new phase in the AIDS response. Combining crisis management with the

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long time strategic approach. To achieve this, we need to find answers to some tough questions such as, how are we going to tackle the socioeconomic drivers of the epidemic.

How can we ensure that all people in need have access to sustainable treatment prevention and care? How can we speed up development of new generation of HIV drugs, vaccine, and micro [inaudible]. And take advantage of new discovery such as, those around [inaudible].

UNAIDS has started a new initiative for 2041, to explore in-depth this emerging questions. Unless we begun to tackle question like this, and focus beyond, the here and now, we develop and diminish the impact of everything we do today.

This is admitting about action not words. It is about wherever hits the road, and getting the job done. It's about doing more, dream better, and working together to make a real difference for the people, now and in the years to come. Thank you for you continuing commitment. [Applause]

FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you, Michel Sidibe. And now may we invite Dr. Michel Kazatchkine to give us his remarks. Professor Kazatchkine, has spent the past 30 years fighting HIV/AIDS as a leading physician, researcher, administrator, advocate, policy maker and diplomat. [Applause]

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He was elected Executive Director of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria in February 2007, and he took office last April. Professor Kazatchkine please.

MICHEL KAZATCHKINE, M.D.: Thank you. Your Excellencies, President Paul Kagame, First Lady Jena Kagame. Honorable members of Parliament, and members of the Government of the Republic of Rwanda. Distinguished guests, friends, and colleagues in the fight against AIDS. Good morning.

This is my first visit to Africa in my new roll as Executive Director of the Global Fund, and I'm so please to be here in Rwanda. [Applause]

A lead country in the fight against AIDS. I'm grateful to the government of Rwanda for hosting this conference. I'm also, particularly pleased that the Global Fund is a co-sponsor of this important conference. Partnerships, indeed, are critical to achieving our goals.

All of you here, implementing national programs, all of you from the co-sponsors, PEPFAR, UNAIDS, UNICEF, World Bank, WHO, GMP+ are so important and key to success.

Five years ago, we didn't yet have PEPFAR, and the Global Fund was still an idea. A compelling idea which emerged from the recognition of the urgent needs to mobilize significant additional resources to support countries to turn

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the tide against the devastating human social economic and developmental impact of AIDS, TB and Malaria.

In just over years, since its creation the Global Fund had committed \$7.6 billion US dollars in programs in 136 countries.

Together with PEPFAR, we're now supporting 1.58 million people on AIDS antiviral treatment in the developing world. All of us together at PEPFAR, the World Bank, UNAIDS, and co-sponsor UN agencies, and the Global Fund, we have demonstrated that scaling up prevention and treatment, in resource limited settings, is feasible and has impact the global health landscape has profoundly changed. Scaling up further and improving programs will now depend on two conditions.

One is the availability of substantially higher, more predictable, and sustainable resources. And second, stronger, and better-coordinated partnerships between multi-lateral and bi-lateral partners, NGO's and the civil society at large, including the communities of people effected by the diseases and the private sector.

As my colleagues have said, [inaudible] are responding to the call for much higher levels of sustained funding. President Bush has proposed doubling the resources committed to PEPFAR.

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And last week G8 leaders endorsed the proposed three-fold increase in the resources channeled through the Global Fund by 2010. But we all know, that more money alone will not be enough.

We must all do our part in living up to our commitments to maximize the effectiveness of the resources, by harmonizing and streamlining our efforts. Not least, because our collective performance in Aid coordination will determine our ability to secure more funding.

Strengthening partnerships for program harmonization and alignment is clearly the over arching agenda item for this particular meeting.

As a financing instrument, entirely reliant on the network of country partners to deliver results, coordination is critical for the effectiveness of the Global Funds model. Maximizing overall efficiency, and minimizing procedural burdens on countries are built into our operational model.

But perhaps even more important is that the Global Fund views coordination, as an essential means for advancing the core principle of country ownership.

Ultimately, the sustainability of all efforts, enhance the lasting impact on the AIDS epidemic rests on genuine ownership of programs by all those in the country, including government and civil society, who can contribute to

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its success. Only by working together with unity and purpose can we turn the tide against AIDS.

Dear friends and colleagues, all together you have given the world an extraordinary source of hope. Together let's make it a reality. [Speaking in French] [Applause]

FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Professor Kazatchkine. And now may I invite the Honorable Minister of State for HIV/AIDS and other epidemics to invite his Excellency the President of the Republic of Rwanda to officially the meeting.

HONORABLE MINISTER OF STATE FOR HIV/AIDS:

Distinguished guests, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I really feel very honored and privileged to introduce for opening remark a leader, whose vision and guidance, whose commitment and unwavering support continue to inspire us in the fight against HIV/AIDS and two words, sustainable developments.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming his Excellency the President of the Republic of Rwanda for his opening remark. Thank you. [Applause]

H.E. PAUL KAGAME, PH.D.: Leaders of [inaudible], our guests, Ambassador Mark Dybul, Office of the United States of Global AIDS Coordination, Dr. Michel Kazatchkine, Global Fund, Elizabeth Mazatac, UN Secretary Generals Special Envoy

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on HIV, AIDS in Africa, Michel Sidibe, UNAIDS, Françoise Welter, Global Network of people living with HIV/AIDS, African and Rwandan Ministers, the development partners, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I join all Rwandans to welcome you, very warmly, to our culture and to our country. And look forward to the insight and wisdom that will be generated from this global gathering.

This 2007 HIV/AIDS Implementers Meeting is ground breaking for several reasons. It assembles leading implementing agencies under one umbrella, to collectively assess past performance, and more importantly to rededicate ourselves to an even more innovative fight against HIV/AIDS.

We are please to have with us at this [inaudible] meeting [inaudible], leaders, and experts of key agencies in this fight against HIV/AIDS. Including, the US Presidents emergence plan for AIDS relief, the Global Fund, UNAIDS, UNICEF, the World Bank, the World Health Organization and the Global Network of People living with HIV/AIDS.

With us today, also, African and Rwanda Ministers Senior Public Policy makers and representatives of other regional and international agencies that play critical rolls in this common challenge.

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Ladies and gentlemen, the significance of this implementers meeting becomes all the more evident and relevant when its subjectives are considered.

You have before you at least three primary tasks. First, you intend to draw lessons from recent HIV/AIDS initiatives, particularly in times of prevention, treatment, and care problems, building local capacity, and coordination among participants.

Second, you will engage in a constructive dialog on future directions of HIV/AIDS programming with a strong emphasis on removal of barriers for faster and greater impact. Third, this meeting will shed more light on the good practices and incorporate them into our future.

I trust that you will also consider, the sustainability of the good work that we are doing to combat this pandemic. Our combined efforts can only result in real long term benefits if they are focused on strengthening Africa's, among other continents, National Health Systems and building our human capacity.

In this respect, African leaders, if I speak particularly for Africa in this case, and the governments must allocate and consistently increase financial resources to national health by just, as we join others properly in this fight. [Applause]

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Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, as we embark on this important dialog on HIV/AIDS, it is important to give your recognition to recent achievements.

We know for example, that international surge in the fight against HIV/AIDS continues to grow. This is best on a great appreciation of the fact that only sustained joined action in containing this pandemic can bear meaningful results.

It is this realization that has led to pledges and allocation, of a significant financial resources to combat HIV/AIDS international. Equal important is the fact that we now have global consensus that is [inaudible] against these disease can only bear effective results, if tackled within the broader framework of sustainable development.

Fighting HIV/AIDS and related diseases cannot be separated from the general struggle against ignorance, [inaudible], and poverty. Indeed, a healthy operation is one that is dedicated, skilled, and economically active.

Another recent achievement is the increased acknowledgement that effective global partnerships hinge on domestic leadership and national ownership of policy. Expedience has convincingly, demonstrated that externally designed and extruded policy blueprints have never been able

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to transform [inaudible]. Only accountable and transplanted national actors with a vision, supported by partners, that share large purpose achieve this work. [Applause]

Friends and colleagues, in Rwanda we've made modest progress in this [inaudible]. Within the past five years, we have developed and implemented several important policies, including, our general health sector policy. The multi-sectorial plan for HIV/AIDS, the care, and treatment plan, as well as, the national prevention plan.

More broadly, our national AIDS policy aims at greater coordination of support from development partners. In addition, our development plan, the economy development and poverty national strategy incorporates at the core HIV/AIDS programs. This is because we fully recognize the need to create economy drivers for greater prosperity in our country, as the strategic and long term means of battling this pandemic.

What has been the impact of these developed policies and out come? We have [inaudible] that improved results in many instances particularly in aspects of voluntary testing, prevention, treatment, and care. For instance, in the year 2001 there were 15 voluntary, counseling and testing centers for the whole country.

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We now have 256. Almost 2 million Rwandans have been tested in these centers in the last five years. In the case of prevention of mother to child transmission, there were eleven centers in 2001, and this has increased to 234 countrywide. There were only four [inaudible] treatment centers in 2001, compared to the current 138 treating near 40,000 Rwandans, as mentioned earlier.

This is us. In a [inaudible] what can achieved by world co-net partnerships. It is thanks to our development partners, and the Rwandan Institutions, that we have made these modest achievements, but serious challenges still remain. Key among the challenges in is the question of the state and capacity of our national health infrastructure, particularly, with regard to public health professionals.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are still well below the [inaudible] of one [inaudible] per 10,000 inhabitants. Our current reality is one Doctor per 50,000 people.

One [inaudible] we did not meet, that we show recommendations as they are largely graduates of secondary schools of the [inaudible] institutions. We are [inaudible] in this regard. On the supply side, we have one institutions of higher learning are not yet able to not [inaudible] from us a professionals. On the rotation side, we are best with what I may call [inaudible] brave rate.

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Meaning, that many one have professionals leave their sector, to pass to other [inaudible]. We also know that bravery to the different, to the affluent world continues to see us [inaudible] especially in the health sector.

Ladies and gentlemen, we need to make a measure break through in strengthening Africa's health systems by adequately training and retaining out health professionals through improved retention schemes.

Our shared purpose should therefore be to join forces with our development partners to make these [inaudible]. This challenge should gage your attention at these [inaudible] meetings.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, let me in conclusion, restate my view that these 2007 HIV/AIDS Implementers Meeting, is an important milestone in the fight against the pandemic.

Individuals and exertions [misspelled?] pursing their own program and assessments, cannot talk to much of the benefits to be realized from [inaudible] us, such as this one of global experts, leaders, [inaudible] and policy makers who bring with them their institutional wisdom and experiences.

[Inaudible] with the [inaudible], and I thank you very much for your kind attention, and wish you success in your deliberations. And wish you a happy stay in our country

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for this [inaudible] will be meeting. It is now my great pleasure to declare the 2007 HIV/AIDS Implementers Meeting officially open. [Applause]

FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Excellency for these inspiring words and strong messages. We will, I hope, everybody in the room will bear in mind, as we deliberate, and as we go back to implement. Thank you so much, your Excellence.

[END RECORDING]