

**UNGASS: After the Political Declaration –
Where to from Here?
XVI International AIDS Conference
August 15, 2006**

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CRAIG MCCLURE: Good morning, my name is Craig McClure. I'm the executive director of the International AIDS Society. I want to welcome you here today. A number of us and seemingly, a number of people in the audience, had some trouble running over from the south side of the conference venue to the north side. This is the only major session hall in the north side, so I think a lot of us are still getting used to this venue.

Our women participants seem to have taken longer than the men. I don't know if that's because we're more aggressive and pushed our way, ran our way over here, or what, but Siphon Mthathi from Treatment Action Campaign in South Africa is due to join us. Beri Hull, I think, from the International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS, and our chair, who is the incoming president of the International AIDS Society, Pedro Cahn, is not a woman, but is also late. But we're going to get going, because time is running out.

Really, the purpose of this session was for all of you to give people a chance from Civil Society in particular who are attending the conference, because after all this is primarily a Civil Society conference at HIV and AIDS. Albeit, with UNAIDS is a strong partner in the organization of the meeting, but the community co-organizers, the International AIDS Society, and most of the people participating, or at least

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the majority of people participating, we're all from Civil Society.

Mary Ann, I might get you to come and join us, if you'd like, from ICASO. Would you like to join the panel? Sure, come on up. Mary Ann Torres, also from one of our community partners for the conference, ICASO.

So really, this session was an opportunity for Civil Society to have an informal discussion with a number of us about reflections on how the UNGASS Review Meeting, held in New York a couple of months ago, the results of that meeting, the process of organizing that meeting, and some discussion about the potential way forward in terms of meeting the goals that were set in the 2001 Declaration and then refined, revised for better, for worse in the review meeting.

So we're going to start off with some very brief comments from a number of people, including a government representative from Canadian government, from CIDA, Stephen Wallace. Views from the community in the south, from Treatment Action Campaign, from CIPO [misspelled?], when she arrives, from Latin America and the Caribbean, from LACCASO Edgar Carrasco, Michele Sidibe from UNAIDS has joined us today. Then, I'm going to turn over in a second to the chair of the session, who is Dr. Pedro Cahn, the incoming president of the International AIDS Society, and our first president from a developing country, from Argentina.

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So yes, here's to that. I'll turn it over to Pedro. The other people on the stage today will join the panel discussion once we have the brief comments from the five speakers. We're going to start with Stephen Wallace, and then move on to Omololu Falobi, and then on to Edgar Carrasco. Pedro.

PEDRO CAHN, M.D., PH.D.: Good morning, everybody, apologies for being late. My first service as president of International AIDS Society has been going to the wrong building, so I hope this does not set the tone for my term. Without further ado, we will start with the Canadian government news. Stephen Wallace, please.

STEPHEN WALLACE: Thanks everybody, good morning. Yes, happy to do so. Can everyone hear me, by the way? Is that all right? Well, listen, good morning. First of all, I salute your dedication to the dawn. The people who are here, I think are going to participate in an interesting dialogue, and I've just thrown all my notes away, because I think this is not about formal presentations and about going through PowerPoint presentations and so on.

I'm just going to ad-lib a few things from, really, a personal perspective as one of the delegates that helped negotiate the agreement. Okay, I can get a little closer. Is that all right? Yes, I'm coming, let me start by saying who I am.

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My name is Stephen Wallace. I'm with the Canadian International Development Agency. I was part of the Canadian delegation helping to negotiate the Declaration less than 10 weeks ago. My perspective as part of that delegation, therefore, is colored by my development background, some of the comments that I would have come from that perspective.

What I think struck me most, because I had done a number of negotiations over the last 20 years or so in that particular context about, was how some things haven't changed at all and some things have changed quite a lot. What hasn't changed is the fundamental culture and character of the UN negotiation, which is slow, and it is painful, and it's awkward. It's uncertain, and at 3 o'clock in the morning when you are supposed to be giving the Declaration out to the world, it is scary, but it is still an extraordinarily important and vital aspect of trying to build a sense of common purpose, and to check the sense of consensus that there is out there. So I was struck by how that was the same. It is something between New York and what they put in the water there, capitals and how you work with a whole range of actors that I find, is still something that needs to evolve.

I was also struck, however - I remember 20 years ago doing negotiations where we would caucus as the G7, and a few people in the back room would cook up a deal. We would come out. We would display it and then we would go home. It

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doesn't happen that way anymore. I was struck by the kind of pluralism that you saw on the skeptical scrutiny that came from Civil Society. When we would have delegation meetings in the morning, I would walk in, I didn't see many government people there, but I saw a lot of people who knew a lot of things, who asked a lot of questions, and were quite, I thought were quite active and were quite influential in the way things happened.

So the process for me has been a real contrast, a huge number of things that still need to be worked on if we are to do this in a way which is better. I was waking up this morning thinking, I wonder if we negotiated the Declaration at this meeting, if the Declaration would have been different than what we did 10 weeks ago. I bet it would.

So struck by a number of things. Struck by how when you build up a sense of global consensus around issues and what is important, how you can't take it for granted. I thought from what we are doing in Cairo, in Beijing, the 2001 Declaration and all of the things that we had built up as a global community, that that was the platform for going forward. That's not the case. What happens very often with these negotiations is people go back to fundamentals. People challenge. People say, "Well, I'm not sure that we should have agreed to this." So it's almost like two steps forward, maybe two and a half steps back, another couple of steps forward. It's that approach that struck me. It's not taking one step

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and going forward. It's really throwing everything in a big pot again, mixing it up and hoping that what comes out is semi-coherent. Hoping that what comes out is to the measure of the kind of devastating challenge that this planet has still not met.

I was struck by that and how much more needs to be done to try to make this kind of process of building global consensus work so that it indeed can help and not hinder the kind of accelerated progress that we all want.

What are some of the things that I saw that people fought very hard for? I was struck by the role that engagement played in the discussions, in the negotiations. That part was good. There were missing parts. The text, for example, in communities at risk, didn't fully reflect the kind of engagement that you needed. I was struck by the sense of accountability. Political declarations had been, 10 years ago, treated as aspirational political objective setting, nice-sounding words and not much more. I was very struck by how you were trying to hardwire in these political declarations, a means to measure, to follow up and to keep things on the front burner.

I was struck by how hard a number of people worked to put the words, "Rights, empowerment, equality" and "woman," in the same sentence. I was struck by that a lot. I was struck by its importance and there are many things that we did do in

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that declaration, but that is one thing that I think is a basis for moving forward, and we can talk about it.

We have an on one hand and on the other. On the funding side, nothing that you could take to the bank. You have recognition. You have a sense of progress. You do not have the things that you would see in a pledging conference. This is a political declaration, so you have some things there, but other things are not. I was struck by how the 2001 Declaration helped condition some of the things and what happened 10 weeks ago. This notion of health systems, the focus on people and how they play into it. The focus on the work force, the basic underpinnings both public, private, community and people affected by HIV/AIDS. That sense of how that needed to be integrated more into the process. I was struck by the evolution from 2001 to 2006.

Overall, I had a sense that we could move forward, but that we had to do a number of things that we hadn't done in 2001, and that we are going to need to do now. I was struck by how we have to make a way of saying that political declarations are just part of a process of a political agenda, which is dynamic and ongoing. We do not revisit these things every five years and decide at that point what's going on.

A political declaration should reflect where we are and where we are going, in a way that is fitting with the overall political agenda. We need to integrate a political

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agenda, and we need to integrate a lot of the things that are in that declaration in ways that institutionalize it, spread it out, make the ownership and the coordination work a lot better. I think some of my colleagues on the stage will talk about it, but I have a sense that you have to take as you move into that record to action, you have to break it down into the concrete, action oriented, personal and real kinds of things that then will make this declaration succeed or not. That jury is still out, I think. A lot of work remains ahead of us, but you can see a number of the reference points. I'd stop there just to try to throw some ideas for discussion. Thank you.

PEDRO CAHN, M.D., PH.D.: Thank you. Our next comments will come from Omololu Falobi from Nigeria, from the African Civil Society Coalition.

OMOLOLU FALOBI: Thanks. Hi, good morning, everybody. My name is Omololu Falobi. I work with a group called Journalists Against AIDS in Nigeria, but I'm here because there is a broad based coalition called the African Civil Society Coalition on HIV/AIDS. But I've been working intensively for the past five, six months to try to mobilize more intensively the community response to the epidemic in Africa.

I'll just take one minute to talking about that coalition and then change to my ideas on UNGASS and what we are trying to do around that.

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In us, all of us know in Africa that there is the epicenter of the epidemic, and nobody past 25 years, 20 years in some parts of Africa, we've had a topsy-turvy response to the epidemic. We have contacted in Uganda and Senegal and [inaudible] quite early, and then with other countries, other African countries that have been quite, quite criminal in their own response. It's a shame that three [misspelled?] after, we have many declarations, but we have not had much action. And so I led this year in the lead up to UNGASS, [inaudible] Africa's UNGASS, which was the Abuja's Summit on AIDS, TB and malaria that was held in Abuja late [inaudible] of this year. Many organizations [inaudible] in Africa and also in [inaudible] just work in Africa, decided to come together to coalesce a stronger response that is unified, that is intense, and that is cross continent in Africa to essentially in this era of universal access, made a commitment everywhere, 2001, the DOC and UNGASS, 2001. Also the Abuja, the original Abuja Summit also by the African Union. Then [inaudible] commitment plus on universal access. So it seems to be a great time to deliver.

We thought that from experience of 20 years, 25 years, people won't deliver unless they get pushed to do that. And that also, that we won't work very effectively as [inaudible] if you work separately. We need to tap into the energy, enthusiasm and the share repertoire of knowledge among African communities on [inaudible] and for the very strong country

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level regional response to this epidemic. So we had a meeting in Abuja early in April that was attended by over 90 [inaudible] from up to 20 countries in Africa that are not established the African Civil Society Coalition, [inaudible]. It profiled around that was submitted in a few minutes here.

For us in Africa as [inaudible], we think that we need time of action. We need time where we need to really push our government and push ourselves to greater intensified action. And all that [inaudible] that kind of opportunity, but before that we had Abuja, and as I had said, Abuja is our own UNGASS. Because we had opportunity to have had this meeting in a month earlier of African [inaudible], we worked to come up with a very clear composition that adequately said what our kind of [inaudible] wanted in terms of what countries need to deliver from 2001 Abuja and on to the 2006 Summit. So work in the process of Abuja and in the actual meeting itself was quite very strong.

We're extremely pleased that our work [inaudible], and the Abuja documents, the [inaudible] to UNGASS, that the AU signed that the Abuja called for [inaudible] action on HIV and AIDS were really very strong effective documents. We are actually very proud that our leaders were able to achieve that, and unlike UNGASS we had very clear targets on TB, on prevention, on treatment, on care support, on counseling, our visibility was quite thorough. [Inaudible] to reach [inaudible]

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prevention for all Africans by [inaudible] and by [inaudible] treatment for all Africans, 100-percent condom access, and we were very clear, adequate agenda. So [inaudible] I want to take that into UNGASS because that was an African composition that ever since adopted.

Unfortunately, many things went wrong. The AU that was supposed to scale ahead that delivery, failed to do its job. We worked very hard with AU. Because the African Union is a very important institution, but we have a lot to be lot to be learned on that score. But also many of the missions, the African missions in New York, failed to implement Abuja. That was a very clear disconnect between what the capitals in Africa agreed to and what the missions in New York were saying. We [inaudible] to find out between the AU and the countries, and missions and repetitions on stage, write letters and make a lot of transatlantic phone calls. Fortunately, we do get a lot of [inaudible] out of that. Yes, paragraph 10 of the Declaration confirmed and acknowledged the support, the intense response, by African government and African institutions such as AU, have given to HIV/AIDS, but [inaudible] implicitly states our [inaudible] to the composition. We continue clear targets. [Inaudible].

But on the positive side, it was very great for us as [inaudible]. It was the first time we had [inaudible] in Africa becoming united. So we did have all of this

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[inaudible], African [inaudible] working completely well. One body, one voice, one message. And I think I did ask for the message and recognized that commitment that we have.

So leading up from UNGASS, what we need to do? Plenty of work. From experience we know that commitment, that declarations, won't make change happen with our leaders, also with ourselves. We are taking steps, our second steps to ensure that we fulfill our roles by setting very clear in the [inaudible] documents, the Abuja documents for [inaudible] response [inaudible] in ensuring that targets are set by December 2006. So we are working very extensively with the AU, with the African Union, with UNAIDS [inaudible] – what he has plans for. [Inaudible] for developing [inaudible] countries in Africa. To set guidelines towards [inaudible] setting.

[Inaudible] tomorrow also, universal access we are really hoping to hear from [inaudible] in government our [inaudible] on their response to that. But what we need to do, very frankly, also is that we need to take the work from global to local. [Inaudible] are very important. They are nice platforms for us to act, but the work has to be done at country level. That is the way the impact has been felt, and that is the way the [inaudible] have the most resources and the most strength. I [inaudible] work intensively ourselves, to ensure that UNAIDS strength is working in country level. [Inaudible] and work intensively with [inaudible]. The coalition comprises

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many [inaudible], very, very strong member, and the African, [inaudible] HIV, women organizations, so it's a very cross-cutting platform.

So we're going to translate all of that in [inaudible] to work on country level, and ensuring that [inaudible] there, [inaudible] there are [inaudible] with appropriate information, and we give them support in the MIE, in advocacy, in negotiation so that this year our journey begins the road for Africa to recovery on HIV and AIDS. And that 2010 we have something to report on, maybe 2010, but that's [inaudible], but by December we ensure that all African countries, we open up all African who have set very clear targets based on the Abuja document that was very, very explicit, and there is no reduction on the targets in Abuja. [Inaudible] countries very anxious to [inaudible]. We are very, very, [inaudible] ourselves in [inaudible].

Now what we want from all of you, [inaudible] internationally is the kind of support that you give us in UNGASS. By recognizing that we have our own Africa. Africa has its own response, and [inaudible], but we have our own voices, and we can speak for ourselves. And that you can encourage us to [inaudible] the time in the past year, Africa was spoken for by other people in the north, [inaudible]. As a continent most effective by this epidemic, I spoke [inaudible] all on HIV and AIDS, we need to get support. We need to get

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the space and your support [inaudible] perspectives and reaching out on skills. Thanks.

PEDRO CAHN, M.D., PH.D.: Thank you, Omololu. Now we will hear Edgar Carrasco from LACCASO, Venezuela, talking about the Civil Society involvement in negotiations.

EDGAR CARRASCO: Yes, do we ask for the slides. Probably would be better as it is too early in the morning for me to speak English, and we will have a lot for you. Good morning, everyone. I'm really glad to be here to continue sharing the issues regarding UNGASS follow up. Let me share with you an experience we have been preparing in the region to follow up and monitor the obligations, and [inaudible] the goals of the declaration of commitment in terms of how government in Latin America and the Caribbean are – the performance of the government on the compliances of the goal of the declaration of commitment.

We start to take in the experience of human right organizations on the issue of monitoring performance of the government. We start to monitor approaches sub-regionals, in a sub-regional way, that means in our region we have different economical agreements that gather some countries to be together in order to deal with commercial issues. We decided in trying to look for the leadership of government in the region, how can governments approach sub-regionally those crucial issues regarding AIDS. For example, access to treatment, and for that

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reason, we approach in our second monitoring and evaluation report of UNGASS, the sub-region of what we call Southern Cone, which is composed of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and Chile. We tried in the context of these sub-regional agreements, commercial agreements, to look for how we can improve the international cooperation in issues regarding HIV/AIDS.

I would like to share with you what we call the lesson learned in our last report. I have some copies to share with you, also in the three versions of Spanish, Portuguese and English. The findings after we prepared the reports and we collected all the information on country and the regional levels, are that there are needs in this process of monitoring the accomplishments of UNGASS rule by member states from Civil Society, for the organization in Civil Society is a very innovative experience for the future.

For that reason, we have a lot of challenges to address. We consider after this report, that there is a need to continue the examination of the meaning, the content and the amplitude of the Declaration of Commitment in the fight against AIDS. Also, we have to continue the dissemination of the political declaration among Civil Society groups. This is an important issue because there is still a lot of ignorance, a lot of disinformation and misinformation about what is the meaning of the Declaration of Commitment, and how government

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and Civil Society have to address the accomplishments of the Declaration. It is a tremendous need to [inaudible] way to secure, appropriate and organize human resources to be able to exercise the monitoring and evaluation process in the region.

It is a need to introduce in communities the idea that the process of monitoring and evaluation is a continuous process, and not just only when the UNGASS happens in New York. Access to information was one of the most important findings in terms of how communities are able to access information to monitor the performance of the government. One of the biggest challenges in all of those countries we monitor, the main issue was the access to information. How to improve the ways that Civil Society is able to access information.

Also, it is important extend the dialogue between Civil Society and governments aiming at the comprehension that monitoring and evaluations are a very important contribution to improve public policies.

In some ways, the process of collecting information requires [inaudible] from the goals governmental and governmental sector, because there is conflict between Civil Societies and government in the process to collect that information. In that regard, in some ways, this is connected also to the fundamental right to access information. Also the need to have a clear idea how these reports has improved public policies.

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Another challenge, another finding is related to how Civil Society, even governments are able to analyze objectively the information gathered. And how the results of the monitoring and evaluation are able to reflect the reality, because if you approach communities in terms of prevention our sub-regions, you will see that some groups of populations, our poor level populations, which are not really involved in the process of prevention, nor is civil service is directly [inaudible] in the population, you are going to find contradiction with another vulnerable population. There is different views in communities how governments are responding, and that depends on the group of people who are involved or belong.

Also, there is a tremendous need in the region regarding the need to collect and systematize cases of evaluation of human rights of people living with HIV and populations in vulnerable conditions.

One other important finding, there is no data. There is no information on Civil Society. There is a lot of denouncing. There is no systematization of that information, which is real important in order to wield those reports bi-annually.

Finally, we consider there is also a need for support. The process of capacity wielding and monitoring and evaluation as specifically the Declaration of Commitment, and also the political declaration, which is a process totally different

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than the programmatic view of monitoring and evaluation. We have to introduce in communities the idea of how communities and governments can monitor adeptly the Declaration and Commitments on the context of international commitments. Thank you.

PEDRO CAHN, M.D., PH.D.: Thank you, Edgar. Our next speaker will be Michel Sidibe, who will tell us what's the UNAIDS for collection of the process and the UNIADS role in supporting the process at the country level.

MICHEL SIDIBE: Thank you. Thank you very much. Michel Sidibe, I think you noted, oh well. Thank you. Thank you. I think what is very important to share. Stephen was reflecting on the process. I will not come back to that one, but I want to just remind ourselves that we are struggling really, to make a deep impact in this epidemic. We have to remind ourselves that the number of new infections, the number of deaths is rising. We are having difficulties, really, to reach a few people there. The mitigation programs are not really working. We must do things certainly, faster. We must quicken the pace of the action. That process really began also to articulate the role universal access debate.

We managed to have almost, I can say, 10,000 people involved in this social kind of dialogue on how and where of cycles. How we make sure that we can address them systematically. We managed to have more than 130 countries

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mobilized in this discussion, and the seven regional groups which have been able to come and discuss global starting [misspelled?] committee comprising different constituents in Civil Society and academician. What came out was from my point of view, one of the best platforms for creating a movement, a social movement, which can really help us to transform the response. The assessment report which has been represented to review, AIDS Review in June, is your products [misspelled?]. This assessment is brought, let us be honest, it identified practical strategies, it identified obstacles, has not been shied to really come out with a really clear identification of major problems related to vulnerable groups, named them clearly.

But we know the frustrations, which has been expressed by all of you that the negotiations it takes is always difficult to bring all those perspectives.

But my point of view is very clear. One, it is important first to not forget this assessment report, which is clearly coming out with six areas which we all agree which are important. Two, we need to transform this assessment report, which is your voice as a platform for action, of course, link that to political declaration, but I think the assessment report identified critical issues. One, priority setting, making sure that the targeting is well done. Two, make sure that the capacity gap in institutions, like yourself or

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capacity in the system, which are delivering how we can address them in an innovative manner. Three, how we make commodity available to the people in an affordable manner, which is very critical. Four, stigma and discrimination, people were marginalized. How we can use that as a platform to really come to create demand for services, and I can say, sustainable financing, long term financing. Moving for adept [misspelled?] type of approach. Transforming this response and to have to make sure that AIDS is not just a deal we have in installation [misspelled?]. But we frame it into development framework to make sure that we have it. Lastly, accountability, not just accountability like we have been talking about, but mutual accountability, creating independent bodies. Making sure that all the things you were talking about could be happening.

So those are the platforms which came from you, not from us. Let us not forget about those platforms. What we are doing now is very clear. We are convinced that two victors [misspelled?] were there. One is from my point of view, is the global target on financing. Even if Stephen said, is not, but it is with the first time we are mentioning in political declaration \$20 billion to \$23 billion. You don't know how much it has been difficult to make that coming in this political declaration. It is a powerful global target, which we should have a platform, a framework to make sure that we have advocacy, which makes people accept that these \$20

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billion, \$23 billion has been calculated based on comprehensive services which can be given to the people. Increasing the numbers of people and for treatment, toward universal access, access to care, prevention.

So all the things you were talking about are based on those financial resources. Seven one [misspelled?] is a target at country levels. I know that has been contentious. We have a lot of discussion, but we are convinced, like you said that no declaration will be implemented if we don't create an obligation, if we don't create accountability at the country levels. If it is not owned by the people, if all those global targets are not properly translated into local targets, which we can monitor, which can [inaudible], it will be difficult.

What we bring there is very clear. One, we are reviewing all the situations today, and I can tell you that it is not necessarily – thank you for coming, my dear – it is not necessarily satisfying us, because we know that most of the national targets which have been established in the regular plan or like the trend I'm showing you. You have two scenarios. If you look at the blue one, it's the current scenario. In 2010 will be for 10 TCT [misspelled?], if we reach it, 20-percent globally, we are less than 9-percent today, it will be wonderful, but what we want is to quicken the pace. To change the direction. To make sure that we push the countries to redefine to another ambitious target setting. To

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make sure that the order, I don't know how to say that, pink color, will be the one we want to create.

So that's for to doing that one, we want, we need you, because we are now communicating with all the original bodies. African Union will be supported by two of three experts from UNAIDS during this last three months, or to accelerate to make sure this original target which has been set, could be translated and countries will be supported to have that one. Two, we will communicate with [inaudible] and all those original networks to make sure that they can also support their respective countries to come out with ambitious targets. Three, we are working with Civil Society network. I think tomorrow we will have another meeting here, but we will have the follow up meetings in each region to see how really Civil Society could be strongly involved in these all targets, and we will have a framework for accountability. What we call accountability framework for each UN agencies. Making sure that the role is spelled out clearly, what they should do to support this process at country levels.

So those are a few steps that I want to, just not to take too much of your time, but show critical if we want really to make this reality by November or December. I know that in each country is particular. It will be difficult for some countries to reopen the debate, to make people decide on that one, but we personally will fill that, if it's associated to

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resource bases, it is associated to discussion which we had in universal access, how to quicken the pace by improving capacity and order. Certainly, many countries will be happy to reopen this debate. But if it's no incentive, no, I think it will be not easy if we don't [inaudible] pressure on the backup side like you have been doing during this whole process.

But again, let us not forget, assessment reports are very important. It is your voice. It is a platform for creating a real movement to really make sure that we go to watching universal access. And locking ourselves in a forced debate and not being happy with the declaration, and losing the momentum, which can transform the fight against HIV/AIDS, will be a pity.

PEDRO CAHN, M.D., PH.D.: We would like to have now the view from an activist living with HIV/AIDS. Welcome, Sipho Mthathi from Treatment Action Campaign.

SIPHO MTHATHI: Thanks, sorry for coming late. I have bad issues and I was trying to negotiate my way. I'm sorry for having missed the larger part of the discussion, because I think it's a really critical discussion, particularly three months after the Declaration was established. I think it said very specific starting points, which I think provide entry points for our work.

I do think, however, that we have to, as much as I see the enthusiasm that is begun, and I note the commitment that's

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beginning to be displayed by UN agencies, particularly UNAIDS, specifically with regard to providing technical and other support at regional level and that's important. But I think that again, we must remember that we have the hindsight of the 3 by 5 campaign, which I think provided many lessons including the fact that we have to prepared in going ahead and in pushing for targets. Particularly to deal with the political resistance head-on, because if we don't do that, and that is for me and I think for many activists already emerging as the biggest threat to universal access, in that we can initiate all these beautiful processes which are about doing the necessary thing of mobilizing people and making sure that a movement is strengthened, that works in a collaborative fashion and brings together government, Civil Society and various other stakeholders.

I do think that we have to put a plan in place regarding how we are going to deal with political resistance. Again, to make an example, already in my country in South Africa, we know and we've started hearing the political resistance. We know that if we don't do that, that South Africa is not going to set targets. The rest of the region is then going to be held back by one country, and we've already seen how South Africa has tried to hold the Abuja Declaration, which I think is the best thing that's come out of UN process

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so far, because it sets very specific targets that are a critical setting point for countries.

So I wanted to emphasize that again the issue of community involvement, because again from an activist perspective there were huge issues in difficulties that we experienced trying to engage with the preparatory process for NGOs, and trying to give input at country level so that community and activist's voices are heard. It was disappointing in many cases UNAIDS particularly, accepted country reports where it was clear that there had been no input from Civil Society, and so that's going to be critical moving ahead.

I'm interested to hear how UN agencies are going to take a different approach to countries who actually don't abide by the principles of NGOs and by the principles, the three one's, and all of the principles which I think set a very good framework for a collaborative approach to managing the AIDS epidemic, particularly making sure that the voices of people living with HIV in communities are heard.

Already we have to reflect on the fact that the failure of the G8 meeting has really set back, in a way, our way, because it was the G8 which first purported this goal of universal access by 2010, but the failure of the negotiations rounds means that the money is not going to come. Again, we are going to have to fight about resources, and so it is a

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critical question for us to think about how we are going to put the pressure on both the multilateral [misspelled?] agencies, but also the countries with money, who need to put the money on the table to show their commitment.

Those were the three critical points I wanted to start with, which I would have made in my presentation.

PEDRO CAHN, M.D., PH.D.: Thank you very much, Sipho, and now I would like to open the floor for discussion. Anybody from the audience that would or even from the panel that wants to react to what has been said, please go to the microphone, identify yourself and let us know what they think about this.

RACHEL GUILLERMO [misspelled?]: Good morning, and thank you very much for a very interesting set of presentations. My name is Rachel Guillermo [misspelled?] and I work for the Open Society Institute.

Following up on the last presentation really, I wanted to ask if someone from UNAIDS could talk a little bit more about your plans for supporting the country level process of setting national targets, because we would like to work with you in putting pressure on governments to include Civil Society representatives in that process, so that we're in a position to monitor the targets once they've been set. Thanks.

MICHEL SIDIBE: Yes, maybe, let me. One, two, three, four. One, is we are working. We already issued guidelines which reduce the number of indicators from 200-something to 11

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indicators, which has been discussed and it is on the assessment report, the back of the assessment report which are critical indicators, which has been negotiated with you. Two, we are now sending guidelines with WHO jointly to the countries on the process of target setting at the country level, which will be issued by the end of this month, early September, which is very critical. Three, we inform all our UCCs at the whole country levels, UCCs and UNAIDS country coordinators to work up closely with you and with government. We've all orders partners particularly also bilateral and orders to bring a consultation around the table to look at the target setting, like I was saying. Because how to revisit, how to quicken the pace, how to make sure that all this discussion we had around universal access can be featured in this discussion.

I forgot to say before, maybe I should have said four that would be the first, we are reviewing now, almost we have in house 60 countries feedback on what is exactly region by region, and what is the existing target. They are really ambitious. They are not, they were really good to the direction we are having. We have this critical analysis going on and we can make that also available to you. And I said also, we don't want to disconnect with regional bodies. Let us be very clear even if African Union, all the debate, all the things, we work together, you and us, to make sure that Abuja target setting will be a reality. Should have never happened,

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we thought it was joint, but if we know suddenly marginalized those regional bodies, it will be very difficult to have a pressure on the country, I don't know any countries which are resistant. It will be very difficult to have pressure. I don't see any UN agencies just coming imposing a new target setting to any countries, but Africa Union collectively can do so.

So we said we will have an expert, two or three experts full-time, backing African Union, because we know capacities are lacking there to really accelerate this process to support countries to take their position paper and try to make that as a reference for country's ambitious target setting, and communicating with, I said [inaudible], already communicating with all the [inaudible] communicating with Horizon Tell Corporation [misspelled?] to make sure that also they can come with.

Lastly, what we want is to have a mechanism to collect that, to consolidate and come out with a kind of original goals which can be country goals, but also consolidated, aggregated into original goals for the end year. Those are the processes, and I think is important that, like I said, Civil Society could really also come like you were saying, in a unified manner with a framework which can help us to cooperate together. And to push this agenda, we should not make this momentum just passing

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without taking actions. Those are the few things I can say [inaudible].

ANDY SEAL: Can I add – Michel, can I add to your – I'm here as well, hey. Andy Seal, also from UNAIDS. Rachel, thanks for your question, and really just to build on what Michel was saying. There are a few other practical things that we are doing that I would like you to know about. We're also aware that often our own country staff need some support in being able to offer assistance to Civil Society at national level in being able to ensure that there is full participation in the various processes.

So we have a four-day capacity building meeting for our own staff coming up next month, which we organize straight after the UNGASS meeting to make sure that we were in a position to actually ensure that Civil Society were engaged in national level in the target setting process. We've identified some additional resources as well, that will be determined at national level. How they are going to be used for, whether it will be some kind of meeting or other mechanism to get that kind of input into that target-setting process.

Really we're also looking to just, as Michel was saying, encourage at a regional level through, Omololu has already talked about some of the work with the African Civil Society Coalition, similar activities there so that we're supporting that level of engagement as well.

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Communication is also critical in all of this. I think that one of the things that most of the speakers touched on is that encouraging Civil Society to appreciate what tools are available and how they can be used to be used to keep the promises, to implement the promises that have been made and to also fill in the gaps where declaration are lacking. We just need to be continually communicating with Civil Society in getting basic tools out there. We're working with a number of partners to do that. Some information left at the front from what happened at the July meeting, or the June meeting for example, as well.

KIERAN DADY [misspelled?]: Kieran Dady [misspelled?] from Mike Keslo [misspelled?]. I think it's worth in this discussion remembering that the New York meeting was about two different things. One was a review of the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment. I think the New York meeting largely forgot about that, and there was a lot of input from Civil Society in reports, but a lot of it wasn't included.

Another thing, it's been said by a number of people how many of the reports from the countries didn't actually get input from a broader spectrum of Civil Society and others. Many of the reports actually didn't really mean anything, and they weren't really, governments weren't really held to account even for the implementation of Declaration of Commitment. Not

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even thinking about the political declaration that they then made.

I think people have spoken well enough in terms of how the political declaration itself was pretty much a failure in most people's minds. We can say that largely because Civil Society mobilized and particularly spearheaded by the African Civil Society Organizations in pushing the Abuja Declaration, and the commitments that came out of that. The Abuja Declaration was a proper declaration with targets as we've heard. The political declaration we had in New York, in most people's opinion wasn't worth the process. There were some gains. There were definitely some gains particularly around woman and gender, where actually if you saw the process that was happening, it was Civil Society that inputted into that to make sure that the improvements that came out of the political declaration on woman and youth, I believe, really came from that.

For me, I'm raising it because I think it's an example of how we really need at the country level to support Civil Society to push their governments in terms of both target setting and holding them to account. Without that, I don't think we're going to get anywhere, because we'll just have political statements. We'll have targets that won't be met, and then we'll come to review the targets, and we'll forget to review them because we'll move on.

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So I think it's supporting that Civil Society at the country level particularly, to hold their governments to account and make sure they report on what they've done. Thank you.

ANDY SEAL: Can I just add really quickly that to me, what's really critical going forward is how all of us need to be accountable for what happens next at every level. That's what we're trying to do through this conference. For me, the most striking this in the Declaration is this inability of all governments to agree to name the most vulnerable communities, the communities most at risk. What that says to me is there are still incredible structural, legal, systemic, social, religious, cultural barriers in many countries. In all countries there are social and cultural barriers to really addressing the fundamentals of this epidemic.

As you said, Omololu, that means at country level we need to hold Civil Society, all Civil Society, community needs to hold governments to account, and change those structural barriers; otherwise we're not going to be able to respond. At the international level, UNAIDS, as you've articulated really clearly needs to hold its co-sponsoring organizations to account. Needs to set in place the mechanisms for monitoring, to support countries, to support community, and groups like ICASO, mobilizing community organizations, and IS mobilizing HIV professionals, doctors, nurses, researchers, policy people

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in countries to hold our governments to accounts. It means countries that are perhaps more progressive at least in terms of not having this structural, legal and systemic barriers to addressing vulnerability. We're talking about homophobia, gender, women, injecting drug users, sex [inaudible]. The most vulnerable communities, governments that are more progressive trying to work to pressure governments that are more restrictive to change. It means using groups like the UN Human Rights, the new Human Rights Council to set standards for what all countries that participate in the UN system, in the international system should adhere to in order to make change. I'll just leave it at that.

PEDRO CAHN, M.D., PH.D.: Microphone two, please.

JOANNA MUNDETA [misspelled?]: My name is Joanna Mungeta [misspelled?]. I am from Mozambique, a sub-Saharan African country. I am the chief executive of the National AIDS Council. I would like to raise two points. One of them is related to the fact that we need to deliver, and deliver means to put things in action, and to deliver results which are in accordance with the impact which we need to be sure. So the first point we'd like to raise is that we need to see which kind of systems we need to have in our countries, in terms of not just to make advocacy, but in terms of concretized plans with the right partners.

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So the first thing is decentralization. How can we decentralize the whole decision making process? To decentralize means that we need to have the voices of the community level people, but more than that, what we need is to make things happen at that level. To make things happen at that level, we need to strengthen capacity, and it's not possible to strengthen capacity without strengthening also, the public sector capacity.

So in my point of view, I would like to raise this aspect. I think when we speak about a more comprehensive approach for combating AIDS, we need to see that the systems must be changed in terms of putting people to make their own decision, but at the same time to give the tools they need to put the things to happen at the grassroots level.

The other thing which I would like also to say here to UNAIDS, is that I think UNAIDS has a very important task in each country, but more at grassroots level. How can UNAIDS bring together people and technical assistance which can be side by side with the influent personalities and leaders from the grassroot levels to see how we can put our heads together to make things happen at that level? I'm sorry with my English.

PEDRO CAHN, M.D., PH.D.: Thank you very much.

Microphone one, please.

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MARK HEYWOOD: Hi, my name is Mark Heywood and I'm from the Treatment Action Campaign in the Aids Law Project in South Africa. I just want to make a few comments and questions. For me, I think the critical thing with the declaration, the political declaration coming out of the high level meeting is to recognize it's weaknesses, but now that we have to work it's positives, because although we are upset about it, there is a lot in there that opens doors for us if as Civil Society we mobilize effectively around that declaration.

Two things in particular have been said in this meeting by Sipho and others. One is the targets. We have to get the targets, and we as Civil Society have to have a plan to make sure that we get the targets, and the second, as Michel said, is the finances. How do we make sure that now that it's stated in the Declaration of Commitment, that this is what is needed. That we actually get it. My recommendation is that I think that our weakness in the past with the 2001 Declaration of Commitment was that to some extent, Civil Society let go for a few years. We can't afford to let go of this political declaration and then wake up in 2008 and say, "Oh, look, it's time to review, and we've just noticed that there is serious backsliding." We have to hold on to this thing, and we have to have a plan as to how we hold on to this thing.

For example, I'm not making any hard suggestions, but I would say to Civil Society, "How do we use something like

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December the 1st, will they stay this year?" Will they stay should be focused on the Declaration of Commitment and its implementation, whether it is a piece of paper from six months ago, whether it has been practically implemented.

The second thing I want to raise with ICASO is that I think there is a real need now for, and I hate international meetings, but for an annual council of AIDS service organizations, if you like. And I'm not criticizing ICASO, but a place, an efficient space where AIDS service organizations, not 10,000 of us, but representative and credible of all regions and of all movements can come together and look at this declaration and say, "Where is it happening, where is it not happening, where do we need to concentrate our efforts? Internationally where do we need to work together to support at a national level?" So I'd appeal to you to look at that.

Then the final thing I just want to say is on the issue of funding. Peter said in his opening that no credible AIDS plan should go unfunded, but I think, Peter - and that's right, but I think it needs to be extended. I think it needs to be said that no credible AIDS NGO should go unfunded, because you're not going to get credible AIDS plans without credible AIDS NGOs. We know, at the moment, that most of us are struggling to work the Global Fund which is meant to be the solution to some of our problems, precisely because government is so inept and uncoordinated that national proposals that

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contain NGO proposals are going down, and we are left unable to reach the very communities that people insist that we reach despite the fact that we have the capacity and the means to get to those communities if we didn't have to spend hours and months trying to raise money. Thanks.

PEDRO CAHN, M.D., PH.D.: Thank you. We have time for a very short comment from microphone two.

FEMALE SPEAKER: I would just like to take up where Mark left, actually. I think the thing that struck me most about this panel, is that the role of Civil Society is absolutely critical in taking this forward, and yet at the same time, there is not attention paid to looking at national plans and saying what resources are actually allocated to that advocacy role that NGOs play. That's a theory in a way, because what NGOs generally do is do their advocacy work on the back of their service funds. That has to stop. We have to start saying what proportion of funding our organizations that play a critical advocacy role at national level, why aren't they getting money to do that work?

I welcome the comments by UNAIDS about the contribution you are going to make for capacity building for your end staff and ensuring Civil Society participation, and I think that is a welcome role. There needs to be much more of that happening across [inaudible], and I really don't think we're getting

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there at all in terms of putting direct resources for advocacy effort into discussions about funding.

PEDRO CAHN, M.D., PH.D.: Okay, I think that the bottom line is that we are not satisfied with what happened in June in New York for different reasons that happen that would very well explained in detail by several of the speakers. I think this is a particular moment for the international organizations. If we look at that, it took five weeks in order to stop the war in Middle East, if it has been stopped, which I'm not completely sure, that it speaks about the problem not of the UN Secretary-General who tried to do his best, but the lack of political will of major players at the United Nations system. Just translate this to tradition like HIV/AIDS, which has gained attention, but not that much attention at the headlines as a daily killing of civil people at both sides of the border has been happening.

So I think the main message for us, if we want to in some way fill the gap that has been left after this declaration, we need that all our organizations including UNAIDS obviously, should be following very closely what is happening from now on. I completely agree what has been said from Treatment AIDS group in South Africa that we cannot wait until 2008, 2011 and look back. It's not a formal proposal. I am just talking on behalf of myself. We didn't discuss this so far in the governing council of the International AIDS Society,

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but I am sure that we would be ready together with UNAIDS to convene an annual review in a small group with obviously, all the organizations that are here, and probably others that are not represented. Maybe we could convene and say, "Okay, what has been happening in the last 12 months, and what are the actions to be taken in order come to the next year?" and then see if our efforts in some way have been successful or not. Because if not, this is a recipe for failure. If we wait, this is a recipe for failure.

Our politicians will not do anything if they are not submitted to enough pressure coming from the Civil Society organizations, and we are proud to say that in the International AIDS Society results are seen inside this organization.

So with that we come to the close, and I thank you very much for being here so soon, so early, and see you.

[END RECORDING]