

November 12, 2007

H.E. Dr. Srgjan Kerim
President
United Nations General Assembly
New York

Dr. Peter Piot
Executive Director
UNAIDS
Geneva

We write to you today, on behalf of [x number of] organizations and individuals that have signed this letter to express our concerns about the UNGASS on HIV review process to take place mid-2008. As of today, we do not know when the AIDS Review will take place in the General Assembly (or if it will take place at all) and what form or shape it will take, as well as expected outcomes. There are many different versions of how the process will look like.

We ask for your assurance, as the President of the UN General Assembly, that there will be minimum standards in organizing the AIDS Review meeting.

The member states of the UN General Assembly have already committed to “[d]evote sufficient time and at least one full day of the annual session of the General Assembly to review and debate a report of the Secretary General on progress achieved in realizing the commitments set out in the present Declaration, with a view to identifying problems and constraints and making recommendations on action needed to make further progress”^[1]. We hope that they live up to their commitment.

The Declaration itself articulates the need for strong leadership^[2] and that is what we are requesting from you today. We ask you that you do everything in your power to ensure:

- 1) That the AIDS review is a High Level Meeting, with sufficient time allocated for discussion, exchange and a clearly articulated plan of action to get us to existing commitments, which means that it needs to be more than one day.
- 2) That the AIDS review meeting fully and meaningfully involves civil society, including civil society hearings and with a particular focus on assessing the involvement of civil society in the national responses and AIDS reviews.
- 3) That the AIDS review meeting is separated from the MDG meeting, rather than incorporated into it, in order to ensure that progress on the stronger and more detailed commitments contained in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS including more recent commitments around Universal Access, can be properly assessed.
- 4) That the AIDS review meeting is substantive enough that holds stakeholders accountable to implementing the Declaration of Commitment and reaching universal access.

We have all learned from previous AIDS review meetings of the importance of ensuring strong civil society participation and engagement at all stages of the process and at all levels. For this we also suggest having a civil society taskforce to support your work in the review process.

We trust your leadership and your commitment in making this process as meaningful and inclusive as possible. We remain committed to the success of this review process as a way of

holding our governments accountable, learning from successes and challenges and helping us move forward in our responses to HIV and AIDS.

Since decisions in New York on the AIDS review process will be made in the coming weeks, we would be grateful for a response from you at your earliest convenience and preferably within a week of receiving this letter to allow us sufficient time to develop a plan accordingly.

Signed by:

^[1] DoC Article 100.

^[2] DoC Article 37.