

09 HIV/AIDS AND EDUCATION: WHAT GOVERNMENTS HAVE AGREED ON

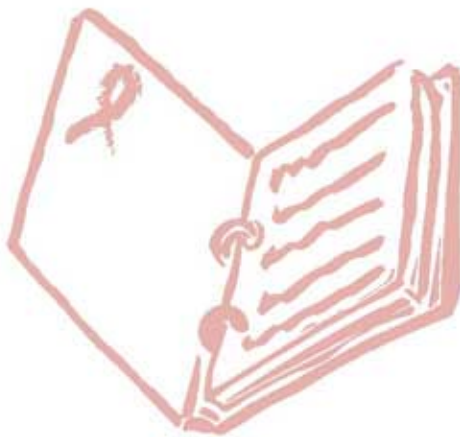
Governments across the world have agreed on guidelines for action in regard to HIV/AIDS and Education. These declarations and international agreements can be used by Ministry/Department officials – you – to convince colleagues and other people about the need to take action.

The Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS

In June 2001, Heads of State and Representatives of Governments met at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) dedicated to AIDS. They expressed their agreement in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS.

The Declaration is a clear statement by governments outlining what has been agreed upon and what they are committed to doing, often with specific deadlines. As such, the Declaration is a powerful tool with which to guide and secure action, commitment, support and resources for all those fighting the epidemic, both within and outside governments. In short, the Declaration presents the best set of guidelines for action against the HIV/AIDS epidemic which exists today. Its main demands are that:

- ❑ Strong leadership is required at all levels of society.
- ❑ Prevention must be the mainstay of our response.
- ❑ Care, support, and treatment are fundamental elements of an effective response.
- ❑ Realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all are essential to reduce vulnerability to HIV/AIDS – the response must be driven by respect for the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS.
- ❑ The vulnerable must be given priority in the response.
- ❑ Empowering women is essential.
- ❑ Children orphaned by HIV/AIDS need special assistance.
- ❑ To address HIV/AIDS means investing in sustainable development.
- ❑ With no cure yet found, further research and development are crucial.
- ❑ The challenge cannot be met without new, additional and sustained resources.



- Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS by the UN General Assembly Special Session
- Millennium Development Goals
- Dakar Framework for Action

Millennium Development Goals

At the Millennium Summit in September 2000, the states of the United Nations reaffirmed their commitment to working toward a world in which sustaining development and eliminating poverty would have the highest priority.

It is recognized that AIDS poses an unprecedented public health, economic, and social challenge since, by infecting young people disproportionately (half of all new HIV infections are among 15 to 24 year olds) and by killing so many adults in their prime, it undermines development.

Goal number 6 (Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases) includes one target related to HIV/AIDS, namely to have halted the epidemic by 2015 and begun to reverse its spread. The three indicators for this target are HIV prevalence among 15- to 24 year old pregnant women, the contraceptive prevalence rate, and the number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS.

The Dakar Framework for Action

The World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000 adopted the Dakar Framework for Action. Strategy Seven of the document calls for urgent implementation of education programmes and actions to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

- 62 The HIV/AIDS pandemic is undermining progress towards Education for All in many parts of the world by seriously affecting educational demand, supply and quality. This situation requires the urgent attention of governments, civil society and the international community. Education systems must go through significant changes if they are to survive the impact of HIV/AIDS and counter its spread, especially in response to the impact on teacher supply and student demand. To achieve EFA goals will necessitate putting HIV/AIDS as the highest priority in the most affected countries, with strong, sustained political commitment; mainstreaming HIV/AIDS perspectives in all aspects of policy; redesigning teacher training and curricula; and significantly enhancing resources to these efforts.
- 63 The decade has shown that the pandemic has had, and will increasingly have, a devastating effect on education systems, teachers and learners, with a particularly adverse impact on girls. Stigma and poverty brought about by HIV/AIDS are creating new social castes of children excluded from education and adults with reduced livelihood opportunities. A rights-based response to HIV/AIDS mitigation and ongoing monitoring of the pandemic's impact on EFA goals are essential. This response should include appropriate legislation and administrative actions to ensure the right of HIV/AIDS affected people to education and to combat discrimination within the education sector.
- 64 Education institutions and structures should create a safe and supportive environment for children and young people in a world with HIV/AIDS, and strengthen their protection from sexual abuse and other forms of exploitation. Flexible non-formal approaches should be adopted to reach children and adults infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, with particular attention to AIDS orphans. Curricula based on life skills approaches should include all aspects of HIV/AIDS care and prevention. Parents and communities should also benefit from HIV/AIDS related programmes. Teachers must be adequately trained both in-service and pre-service in providing HIV/AIDS education, and teachers affected by the pandemic should be supported at all levels.

