



# GET INVOLVED IN THE 2021 HIGH-LEVEL MEETING AND INFLUENCE THE 2021 POLITICAL DECLARATION ON ENDING AIDS





## SECTION 1

### What is this Guide for?

This is a short guide to serve an easy way of understanding the High-Level Meeting, the Political Declaration, and how these can impact your country's HIV response. This also have a short menu of options for how you, at country level, can push for integrating civil society recommendations into the 2021 Political Declaration - leading up to, during and after the 2021 High-Level Meeting.

**YES, you read that correctly. Even without travelling to New York, you CAN still engage!**

The Multi-Stakeholder Task Force for the 2021 High Level Meeting on AIDS has launched [the HLM 2021 Civil Society Declaration](#).

To sign on to the HLM 2021 Civil Society Declaration [click here](#)

## WHAT IS THE 2021 HIGH-LEVEL MEETING?

Taking place on 08-10 June 2021, the **High-Level Meeting (HLM)** on HIV and AIDS is a meeting where UN Member States will come together for a comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing the 2016 Political Declaration's commitments in reducing the impact of HIV, and provide a roadmap for the next 5 years to end the epidemic to 2030.

The President of the General Assembly convenes the HLM. This year, the meeting will be co-facilitated by Permanent Representatives of Australia and Namibia to the United Nations.

## WHAT IS THE 2021 POLITICAL DECLARATION ON ENDING AIDS?

A Political Declaration is the outcome of the High-Level Meeting. The Political Declaration, which is agreed by UN Member States, will move the response forward by setting the direction of the global AIDS response for the next five years and securing political commitment for ending the epidemic.

The HLM will produce 2021 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, which will guide or influence your country's national HIV responses and plans, legal reforms to improve legislation on protection of human rights, and financing commitments from donors and domestic governments for the period 2021-2026.

For this reason, **strong commitments** are needed from Member States to prioritise key populations in Asia and the Pacific, promote and protect human rights through removal of punitive laws, create an enabling and protected environment to enable free and equal access to services, increase safe and secure spaces for civil society to participate in decision-making, and scale up implementation of HIV response.

## WHAT IS THE "ZERO DRAFT"?

As part of the drafting process, Zero Draft is usually the first version or the first attempt to build off the 2021 Political Declaration. This Zero Draft would form the basis of negotiations over the principles, proposed provisions, and use of text or language in the Declaration. The Zero Draft is normally shared for comments. The ["Zero draft"](#) of the 2021 Political Declaration was released on 28 April 2021.







## SECTION 2 THE ZERO DRAFT AND YOUR STRONG ADVOCACY

### WHAT ARE THE MAIN POINTS TO NOTE IN THE ZERO DRAFT?

#### THE PROGRESSIVE POINTS

*(strong advocacy needed to keep them in the Declaration)*

Acknowledgment that the international community **did not meet the meet the 2020 targets** set out in the 2016 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS

Commitment to **urgent and transformative action** to end the social, economic, racial and gender **inequalities**, punitive laws, policies, and practices, stigma and discrimination based on HIV status, sexual orientation.

Zero Draft referenced to **“key populations”** and **“populations at higher risk of HIV infection”** and when it acknowledged specific key populations as gay men and men who have sex with men (MSM), people who inject drugs, sex workers, and transgender people; (Par. 20 and Par. 46)

Commitment to **eliminating HIV-related stigma and discrimination**, and **to respecting, protecting and fulfilling the human rights of people living with, at risk of and affected by HIV**

- a) by creating an enabling legal environment by removing punitive and discriminatory laws, policies and practices that block effective responses to HIV and by
- b) Adopting and enforcing legislation, policies and practices that prevent violence and other rights violations against people living with HIV and key populations and protect their rights to the highest attainable standard of health, education and adequate standard of living, including adequate, food, housing, employment, and social protection, and that prevent the use of criminal and general laws to discriminate against people living with HIV and key populations;

Emphasized the inclusion of Treatment as Prevention and Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis into services included in the Combination of HIV Prevention on the ground of scientifically proven efficacy

Commitment to accelerating integration of HIV services into universal health coverage and strong systems for health and social protection, building back better and fairer from COVID-19 and humanitarian crises

Commitment to investing in community-led emergency response infrastructure, and providing strengthened community outreach, information, and peer support during health emergencies and pandemic situations;

#### CONCERNING POINTS

*(strong advocacy needed to effectively change the language)*

Key populations, explicitly and expressly named, must be prioritized not only for combination prevention but also for all comprehensive care and treatment, including integrated programming on HIV/TB and HIV/viral hepatitis;

There is no recognition on the **critical importance of community-led interventions and of key populations in leading in the planning**, design, decision-making, implementing and monitoring of HIV responses, including advocacy in removing legal barriers and creating an enabling environment.

Community-led interventions and responses addressing HIV, differentiated service delivery, must be prioritized and fully funded, as well as providing outline for how financing targets will be achieved applying lessons learned from 2016 Political Declaration.





## WHAT SHALL BE YOUR MAIN MESSAGES?

### Your 5 key Non-Negotiables

As key populations, we must strongly advocate that a strong Political Declaration is one that adopts a progressive language, acknowledges the key populations and strongly commits to addressing gaps, and declares human rights protection and promotion.

More specifically, here are the five points that NEED TO BE INCLUDED in the final Political Declaration

1. **specifically and expressly name key populations most affected by HIV.** These are: people who inject drugs, gay men and other men who have sex with men, transgender persons, sex workers and prisoners. Each key population group must be named, recognised. Specific targets should be developed and set explicitly for each key population group which will result in effective and tailored solutions.
2. **promote and protect human rights and create an enabling environment,** by (list not exclusive):
  - a. abolishing punitive laws including capital punishments in relation to drug efforts;
  - b. decriminalisation of substance use and sex work, consensual same sex behaviour;
  - c. Enacting protection policies to reduce stigma and discrimination on basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, health status,
  - d. Protect personal safety, security and privacy of key populations by setting up safeguards against violations or intrusions
3. **meaningful participation, involvement and leadership** of affected communities at all levels of the HIV response including program design and most especially **service delivery** stages of cascade of HIV services. At least 40 per cent of resources committed for AIDS programmes should flow into high impact prevention among key populations who are bearing the maximum brunt of new infections and deaths. The intention of a people-centred political declaration must translate into the direct engagement of the community at all levels, including policy development, practice, planning, implementation and monitoring of progress. Communities must be empowered and be connected with various stakeholders, including relevant government ministries and agencies, UN agencies, donors and other relevant stakeholders. Broadening the space for communities to become partners in HIV, health and social-protection-related decision-making processes and execution of practices also requires openness, commitment and adequate resources from governments and other stakeholders;
4. Wider access by key populations to scientifically-proven innovative HIV prevention tools such as Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), and HIV Self-Testing (HIVST), including immediate and increased access to Antiretroviral treatment (ART), and adherence among People Living with HIV (PLHIV) as Treatment as Prevention (TasP), using the principles of 'Undetectable = Untransmittable' (U=U);
5. Maximum financial resources towards key population communities and organisations to implement community-led response to HIV and AIDS, focused and increased investments in community-led emergency response infrastructure. In the past year, in particular, but even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, networks and organisations working to prevent HIV and AIDS, experienced struggles and other negative impact due to the national government's de-prioritisation of HIV and AIDS response, coupled with a lack and/or redirection of funding by international donors. The large demands on national health budgets occasioned by consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic must not impede achieving an end to HIV by 2030. Similarly, in order to achieve the 2030 SDG Goal 3, it will be essential that donor countries maintain the established high levels of financial support;





## SECTION 3

### YOUR GUIDE TO INFLUENCING

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM 2016?

The period from 2016-2021 was a period of “glorious inaction”. Civil society did not hold states to account and expose their lack of leadership by asking: “What are you doing? What are your governance mechanisms? What are your political commitments? What is the commitment of resources?”

Overall progress has fallen far short of overall commitments, hindered by insufficient prevention. The people left behind are key populations - those who are disproportionately experiencing the impact of gender inequality, HIV-related stigma, social marginalisation and criminalisation.

## HOW CAN YOU ENGAGE AND CALL FOR URGENT ACTION?

**This is what you can do at country level – but please act fast!**

The High-Level meeting is just around the corner and time is tight. Therefore, please act fast as the final Political Declaration is being negotiated right now. However, there will still be a lot of work to do following the adoption of the declaration which is expected to take place on 10 June.

Here is your menu of helpful guides or tips for effective advocacy that you can take.

**NOTE:** The following are not steps, you are free to pick a tip or a combination of tips that can work for you!

### INFLUENCING TIP 1.

Communicate with your community or your key population networks to quickly agree on your engagement and advocacy points.

Find out who is your civil society representative who is part of the country delegation and who is able to deliver your key concerns and recommendations

### DON'T MISS THIS!

- In 2016, the Delegation of a country who may participate during the HLM are composed of a Government Representative (mostly Ministry of Health), National AIDS Program, Civil Society Representative, PLHIV Network representative and/or a Person Living with HIV;
- The mix of participants' representation was different from one country to the other;
- 2021 Delegation may differ. But take note of these composition in determining your delegation;

### INFLUENCING TIP 2.

Contact your UNAIDS office. You may ask for their support to ensure that your recommendations are delivered. You may also request UNAIDS to facilitate meeting with your Ministry of Health and find out, through your Ministry of Foreign Affairs who is your Country's Permanent Representative to the UN in New York. The purpose of the joint meeting is to discuss in detail your specific concerns and explicit recommendations for the declaration as it is being negotiated







### INFLUENCING TIP 3.

Prepare a short 2- page advocacy briefing on key concerns and recommendations for the HLM as they relate to your country context. You can base it on the collective statement APCOM put together based on 2 consultations and a survey with stakeholders (link below). Send the briefing to UNAIDS in your country, your Ministry of Health, and your Permanent Representative in New York.

[Please send to APCOM as well at communications@apcom.org](mailto:communications@apcom.org)

### DON'T MISS THIS!

- SECTION 2. ZERO DRAFT AND YOUR ADVOCACY of this guide **is made printable** so you can print and use as your advocacy reference.

### INFLUENCING TIP 4.

Link to the regional level for support. Do not hesitate to ask us to submit on your behalf your KP-developed recommendation to the 2021 Political Declaration. Ask to be actively involved in your country's monitoring and implementation of the 2021 Declaration.

#### Don't know who to contact? Get in touch with us we have contacts for:

UNAIDS country office – National HIV Programmes – Permanent Representative to the United Nations

[Email: communications@apcom.org](mailto:communications@apcom.org)





## TIMELINE FOR COUNTRY ENGAGEMENT

- 14 May:** The sooner you can reach out to UNAIDS in your country to ask to convene a meeting with your ministry of health and your Permanent Representative to the United Nations, the better.
- 14 May:** Deadline for any written statements.
- 1 June:** Should be the latest date you have a meeting with UNAIDS, your Ministry of Health and your Permanent Representative to the United Nations and elaborate on your statement.
- In 2016, the Delegation of a country who may participate during the HLM are composed of a Government Representative (mostly Ministry of Health), National AIDS Program, Civil Society Representative, PLHIV Network representative and/or a Person Living with HIV;
  - The mix of participants' representation was different from one country to the other;
  - 2021 Delegation may differ. But take note of these composition in determining your delegation;

### DON'T MISS THIS!

APCOM will convene another round of stakeholder consultations to discuss the final approved 2021 Political Declaration.

## NEXT STEPS

Let us know what you are doing, we would like to gather and learn from you, put our efforts together, share and discuss lessons learned, so that we can become even better when we will engage with the next High-Level Meeting in 2026.

If you don't know who to contact, reach out to us at [communications@apcom.org](mailto:communications@apcom.org)

## Resources for further reading and guidance

1. Asia-Pacific KP Stakeholder Statement  
[https://www.apcom.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2021\\_Asia-Pacific\\_HLM-Statement\\_v6.pdf](https://www.apcom.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2021_Asia-Pacific_HLM-Statement_v6.pdf)
2. END INEQUALITIES. END AIDS. ACT NOW!  
Civil Society Declaration for the 2021 HLM on HIV/AIDS:  
<https://gnpplus.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/20210503-English-CS-declaration.pdf>
3. Zero Draft: PGA letter - Zero Draft Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS  
<https://www.un.org/pga/75/wp-content/uploads/sites/100/2021/04/PGA-letter-Zero-Draft-Political-Declaration-on-HIV-and-AIDS.pdf>
4. Global AIDS strategy 2021-2026 (UNAIDS):  
<https://www.unaids.org/en/Global-AIDS-Strategy-2021-2026>
5. UN Secretary General's report  
<https://www.unaids.org/en/Global-AIDS-Strategy-2021-2026>
6. Link to info on the meeting:  
<https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2021/2021-high-level-meeting-AIDS-brochure>

