

UNAIDS Statement for the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

UNAIDS is pleased to join you all at this Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Since the adoption of the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** in 2015, the world has witnessed an upturn in all forms of disasters. Human suffering resulting from the turmoil of humanitarian crisis is all too clear to see, for example, as experienced by tens of thousands of people in the recent cyclone activity affecting southern Africa.

According to the new released Global Report on Internal Displacement, almost 1600 disaster events triggered new displacement in 2018, forcing 17.2 million people to leave their home. In Africa, more than 1.5 billion people live in countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence. Today, 1 in every 14 people living with HIV are affected by a humanitarian emergency.

We must recognize the cyclical nature of many humanitarian emergencies. Disasters are often repeated in the same area impacting the same and increasingly vulnerable populations and remain localized, complex and protracted. It is within this predictable uncertainty, that steps need to be taken to protect and promote the rights to health and dignity for all. The integration of Disaster Risk Reduction strategies in policy frameworks on climate change, development, and humanitarian assistance, accordingly, must remain our collective responsibility. The need to develop a plan of action that tackles the root causes of vulnerability is nothing new, but its implementation is now urgent. Only through innovative action that draws on diverse resources, that is bold in design as it is practical in approach can we protect the environment and majorly mitigate the effects of climate change. Concerted action commences with open, transparent and committed government at national and local level.

There are three pillars relevant to guide our approach:

1. Models of service delivery that are people-centred and promote participation, especially for key populations, is vital for sustaining change and building resilience. Alternative modes of health care need to be developed that are suited, for example, to migrant populations directly affected by dwindling resources and severe weather events, such

as mobile health care, home-based care and innovative forms of social insurance. Community systems that frame preparedness and contingency plans aimed at protecting those disempowered, those on the margins of mainstream society, must be flexible and ready in advance of any likely disaster. Our joint response, our future, depends on it.

2. For more than 30 years the Joint Programme on HIV and AIDS has worked with humanitarian and development partners in providing tailored services suited to the local context. Substantial gains have been made in securing access to HIV treatment within protracted and complex emergencies. The underlying principle is the right to quality assured social services for populations of humanitarian concern noting that, in many cases, disaster strikes in areas with the highest burden of HIV. The 21 million people now living with HIV is solid progress but much more needs to be done especially through the resilience agenda of Disaster Risk Reduction.
3. We can end AIDS by 2030. We can put in place robust community-based systems that protect the environment, promote an engendered approach to sustainable development that leaves no one behind. This is at the heart of the SDGs. To live in a world where HIV is no longer a public health threat is to realize the holistic nature of dealing with disease, want and inequality. This is wholly possible when solidarity among government, the United Nations and civil society transcends boundaries and works towards enhancing people's wellness and dignity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNAIDS remains committed to working closely with partners in support of the Sendai Framework to ensure that disaster does not in itself lead to greater situations of risk and a downward spiral of poverty leading, inter alia, to a rise in HIV prevalence. The global response to controlling and ending HIV is a pathfinder for its inclusiveness and vision for the future. Let us draw on this approach in dealing with the ravages of climate change.

I thank you very much for your kind attention