

Mr President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nigeria considers the HIV/AIDS pandemic as a big developmental challenge and that has informed the position of the Federal Government of Nigeria in hosting two successive African Union Summits on HIV in 2001 and 2006. The outcomes of these landmark events i.e. the Abuja Declaration of 2001 and the UNGASS commitment in 2006, continue to be the benchmark of National Responses in Africa and indeed across the world. This was reaffirmed in 2006 by the UNGASS commitment and the acceptance of the principles of Universal Access.

Your Excellencies, since the UNGASS in 2006, Nigeria has improved the policy environment considerably. You may recall that in 2005 Nigeria established a new strategic framework, which was put in place as our first multisectoral strategic plan expired in 2004. Given the federal nature of Nigeria, the federating states have also developed states' strategic plans, which derive from the principles of the National strategy. The different sectors including the health sector, education, youth, and women affairs have also established strategic plans which are providing templates for implementing their various responses. The life span of the strategic framework is 5 years and, at its midterm in 2007 it was reviewed. The outcome of the review has provided information for a two-year evidence-based National Priority Plan, which is currently being costed for implementation. Three outstanding features of note in the priority plan are the need to deepen our interventions in the prevention arena, re-strategize our behaviour change communication systems and provide greater care for orphans and vulnerable children. Thus in the last year we have evolved a national prevention plan, we are currently reviewing our BCC strategy in order to address the unique features of our national epidemic, and we are also strengthening our OVC strategy and plans. In addition to these policy initiatives and given the dynamics of the global response to HIV, we have during that period reviewed the HIV Counselling and Testing, Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission and treatment guidelines. This has all been achieved through a

deliberate inclusion and active participation of all stakeholder groups at national level and in all 36 states and 774 Local Government Areas.

Your Excellencies, we are glad to report that Nigeria has made considerable progress in seeking to achieve the principles of Universal Access and ultimately the Millennium Development Goals as it relates to HIV/AIDS. As at the end of the first quarter of 2008 we have provided access to Prevention to Mother to Child Transmission in 250 sites across the nation, a major change from 2006 when there were only 50. The number of HIV Counselling and Testing sites has also substantially increased to 813 and the current evidence we have shows about 3 million Nigerians have been counselled and tested. As at the end of 2007 285 million condoms were distributed which represents an 11% increase in condom over the previous year.

Your Excellencies, with regards to our Anti Retroviral Treatment, cumulatively 269,000 PLWA have accessed treatment out of the estimated 500,000 that need treatment. The different arms of government indeed provide this free. As of 2005 we had 97 sites, now we have 251. With regard to orphans and vulnerable children we have been able to reach only 10% with support and care. However, given the attention that governments at different levels and civil society are now giving to this aspect of our response we expect that there will be considerable increase in the next few years that will assure the targets for universal access by 2010.

Your Excellencies, all the efforts and results that have been articulated would not have been possible without the strong political will of our various governments which has been translated to increased public policy and domestic funding. Nigeria has adopted the principles of the 'three ones', signed the Paris declaration on AID effectiveness and has domesticated the Global Task Team recommendations for donor coordination and alignment. This enabling environment has provided the coordinating agencies, the National Agency for the Control of AIDS, States' Agencies and Committees the necessary authority to provide ownership and leadership at all levels. Furthermore, it has facilitated the active participation of people living with HIV/AIDS, civil society organizations, private sector and faith based organizations who have contributed

immensely to the response. Indeed, the greater involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS in programme formulation and implementation has significantly contributed to the reduction of stigma and discrimination. Today, there are more than 500 PLWA support groups. Since the last UNGASS, Nigeria has inaugurated a Women coalition against AIDS which is decentralized to ensure effective mobilization of women to access information and services. It is important at this juncture to acknowledge that the progress we have made so far in Nigeria would not have been possible without the contributions from civil society.

Your Excellencies, our development partners have made major contributions to our efforts in fighting the epidemic in Nigeria. These include our UN partners, the Global Fund, and the British Department for International Development. A special mention should be made of PEPFAR because of their substantial contribution to the treatment programme. Even though the aid architecture is favourable to HIV at this point, Nigeria has evolved an overseas development assistance policy which ultimately seeks to make domestic resources the core support for all our programmes, thus ensuring sustainability over time.

Your Excellencies, Nigeria has come a long way in its fight against HIV/AIDS. Whilst we have made some modest progress towards the attainment of our international commitments there are still some challenges. Coordination and harmonization continue to present a challenge which we are working to overcome. We recognize that resources available for AIDS can be extended to strengthen health systems such that HIV/AIDS care and support can be further integrated into our health care delivery system. In Nigeria we have made the commitment to ‘fight AIDS to finish’, as we say in our local parlance.

Your Excellencies, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, we thank you for your attention.