

**Rede von Herrn Bundesminister Hermann Gröhe, MdB für
die Veranstaltung von Sant Egidio am 9. Juni in NY**

Distinguished M. Guidotti,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our common vision of ending AIDS by 2030 and the fast track strategy of UNAIDS for the next 5 years reaches far beyond goal three of the SDG-Agenda. For as we all know, a medical approach alone will not lead us to the end of AIDS and sustained low levels of new HIV infections. To attain this common goal we need a comprehensive prevention package that integrates multi-sectoral interventions including access to treatment and care.

Prevention has been, is and will continue to be the focus of the German contribution to a sustainable national and international HIV response as well as its guiding principle. In view of the large proportion of new infections among young people, particularly young women and girls, interventions

need to be more fine-tuned to meet the demands of this group.

Another important aspect of prevention in this regard has also been enshrined in the UNAIDS Fast Track Strategy. It addresses the need for providing youth-friendly information tools such as comprehensive sexuality education. Regardless of their age, adolescent girls and boys and young women and men must be enabled to have access to such information, education and services without any barriers.

The HIV infection rate among young people in Eastern and Southern Africa remains grim. Therefore, the Ministers of Education and Health from 21 countries of the region agreed in the so-called 'ESA Commitment' to cooperate across sectors to improve their national programmes and tools. The German government, one of the supporters of the process that resulted in this commitment together with other partners such as UNESCO is very happy to continuously support the implementation of this excellent commitment on regional and country level.

The SDG target to achieve Universal Health Coverage offers new opportunities. Universal Health Coverage cuts across all targets of the SDG on health and provides an overall framework for the implementation of a broad and ambitious health agenda in all countries.

A precondition for Universal Health Coverage and for achieving the other health-related goals such as “ending AIDS” is functioning and effective health systems. Health systems need to be able to reduce the vulnerability of societies to global health risks and entail the capacity to adapt and respond to specific circumstances. This is also one of the lessons from the Ebola crisis last year. Weak health systems will collapse under those circumstances and the collapse of the health system severely affects treatment programmes for other diseases such as HIV.

We therefore advocate for coordinated efforts at the global level aimed at strengthening health systems and establishing

comprehensive and crisis-proof systems that protect individuals from the financial risks associated with ill health.

In this context Germany, together with the WHO, launched the global initiative 'Healthy Systems – Healthy Lives', aimed at bringing together global health actors in a coordinated, effective and measurable effort to strengthen health systems.

As a stakeholder of the Global Fund, Germany has continuously promoted an increase in domestic resource allocations for health overall as well as for HIV, TB and malaria by Global Fund recipient countries. The Fund's Investment Framework for the next three years makes a strong case on this issue as well, citing it as a prerequisite for a successful global effort in the coming years.

However, to reach Universal Health Coverage targets by 2030, innovative financing strategies including tax reforms in several affected countries are needed not only to address the three diseases but for the financing of comprehensive health services that are needed within different populations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

If we want to improve our effectiveness, we have to make sure that we reach all vulnerable groups. As already mentioned, we have to do more to reach young people. At the same time, it is important for us to reach key populations such as men having sex with men, trans gender people, drug users and sex workers as well. In many countries, they are still stigmatised, subject to discrimination, and in some cases even persecuted. We will only be successful if we can convince all governments to assume political responsibility, and take the necessary steps towards change, so that no one is left behind. Very often, these steps are not popular and the path can be a stony one; however, they are an imperative if we really want to fulfil the vision of putting an end to AIDS.

Let me finish by focusing on three key lessons of the AIDS response, the precondition for achieving our joint goal of ending AIDS by 2030 and, at the same time, the foundation of Sant`Egidio's work.

First, the unique human rights approach, which stands for inclusion and the commitment of leaving no one behind.

Second, the purposeful involvement of people infected with or affected by HIV, including their families and friends.

Third, the need to empower, include and capacitate communities.

Germany for many years has supported Sant`Egidio's crucial interventions in the health sector and beyond. Since 2011, the German Government has supported eight projects in sub-Saharan Africa through funds amounting to approximately 1.6 million EUR.

Further the German AIDS Foundation has supported Sant`Egidio's DREAM Programme with 2.5 million EUR, contributing to the establishment of four HIV treatment centres in Mosambique where pregnant women, young mothers and children can access free antiretroviral treatment.

To conclude, I would like to congratulate Sant`Egidio for its successful efforts in improving access to needed services for the most vulnerable and for its work in fragile contexts which becomes increasingly important in view of current global developments.

Thank you for your attention!