

Title: "Right to Health: Better Access to Testing and Treatment for HIV-positive Children"

Thank you Mr. President.

The Association Comunita' Papa Giovanni XXIII, Caritas Internationalis, Dominicans for Justice and Peace (Order of Preachers), IIMA and VIDES Internazionale, as international Catholic organisations present worldwide and, *inter alia*, directly involved with people living with HIV and AIDS, wish to express their urgent concern about the right to health and access to testing and treatment for children living with HIV and with HIV/TB co-infection.

2, 1 million children under the age of 15 years are living with HIV in the world¹ and only the 38% of those in need of treatment received it. There is a lack of child friendly fixed-dose combinations.

Moreover, one major barrier to treatment is the difficulty to diagnose the infection in children younger than 18 months. The only valid diagnostic test is far too expensive and thus is inaccessible for many health services in low-income countries. The same challenges are faced in efforts to the diagnose and treat Tuberculosis.

To a significant degree, children have been neglected in global and national efforts to combat HIV and AIDS.

By signing and ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Member States committed themselves to promote and respect the rights of children, including the right to health, and for this reason, we wish to make the following recommendations:

1. To advocate and carry out negotiations with pharmaceutical companies and diagnostics manufacturers to produce child-friendly fixed-dose anti-retroviral drugs and diagnostic tests for early diagnosis of HIV;
2. To develop National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plans focusing on Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission Programs and on diagnosis and treatment of babies and children HIV-HIV or with HIV/TB co-infection;
3. To increase allocations of funds for research on paediatric diagnosis and treatment of HIV and AIDS;
4. To develop a specific paediatric focus in funding requests submitted to international bilateral and multilateral donors, including The Global Fund;
5. To seriously address the determinants of health that impede access to medicines for children with HIV and all children in general;
6. To increase efforts to achieve MDGs 4 and 6 by committing to fully fund basic health packages for women and children's health;
7. To effectively ensure that intellectual property rights and trade agreements, such as TRIPS, do not undermine access to essential drugs, life-prolonging and lifesaving medicines and vaccines.

Thank you Mr. President