



WORLD AIDS DAY MESSAGE 2021

DR. ARIF ALVI- PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN

END INEQUALITIES. END AIDS. END PANDEMICS

Today we join with the rest of the world to commemorate the World AIDS Day on *Ending Inequalities, Ending AIDS and Ending Pandemics*, our government commits to support those who are still left behind in equitable access to Health and HIV prevention and treatments. Every year, this is a moment to reflect on how far we've come to since the early days of the AIDS epidemic. And those of you who lived through it remember all too well the fear and the stigma, and how hard people with HIV had to fight to be seen, or heard, or to be treated.

For a long time in Pakistan, people living with HIV and those at increased risk of transmission have faced social rejection and denial of care in health facilities and that is one of the impediments for treatment adherence. Today this day reminds us of those who left abode due to HIV and AIDS but at the same time, we have an opportunity to reflect upon the remarkable progress the world has made in battling it and to commit to end the epidemic by 2030. Pakistan sets the precedence to manage COVID-19 and this will be one of the example for us a country to halt spread of HIV in the country. Prevention, treatment and care are now saving millions of lives not only in the world's richest countries but in some of the world's poorest countries as well. In Pakistan, treatment for HIV and AIDS is free and we should create an enabling environment so that communities feel comfortable accessing the treatment.

As a President of Pakistan, you'll find a staunch supporter in me and let me assure that we will work together with provinces and communities to end inequalities, end AIDS and end pandemic. Looking ahead, Government of Pakistan assures its unwavering support to halt new infections. We'll hold each other accountable, and we'll continue to work to turn the tide of this epidemic together.

So today, I want to urge all those who are commemorating World AIDS Day 2021 today and tomorrow to take up this commitment. We can't change the past or undo its wrenching pain. But what we can do and what we have to do is to chart a different future for our future generations to come, guided by our care and compassion. Government of Pakistan will stand with you on every step of this journey until we reach the day that we know is possible, when all men, women and key populations can protect themselves from infection; a day when all people with HIV have access to the treatments that extend their lives; the day when there are no babies being born with HIV or AIDS, and when we achieve, at long last, what was once hard to imagine, and that's an AIDS-free generation.

As a President of Pakistan, I pledge our continued support to end inequalities, end AIDS and end pandemics together with all of you!