

Joint Youth Statement for the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS 2026

Over the past year, we, as youth public health advocates, have witnessed a global crisis in funding and political support for ending HIV. The environment for civil society organisations (CSOs) around the world is deteriorating, with anti-rights groups and anti-gender movements hindering efforts to end AIDS by 2030.

Domestic funding for HIV and related interventions has not kept pace with demand, leaving many services struggling to survive.

Some UN Member States are criticising the push for CSO involvement in high-level meetings, with some even rejecting human rights as guiding principles for interventions.

UN budget cuts and restructuring have destabilised the international system's ability to hold nations accountable to human rights laws.

National agencies have scaled back community engagement efforts, weakening infrastructure and ending institutional memory.

As a key group disproportionately affected by HIV, we urge Member States to adopt six key priorities. These priorities will help ensure that the 2026 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS builds on past successes and involves young people in future HIV initiatives.

1

All commitments to end AIDS must be evidence-based and address structural inequalities.

Member States and CSOs should support strategies that keep children and youth in schools, promote their social, health and economic empowerment, and meaningfully include them in policy and service processes. These are critical to HIV success – not optional add-ins.

2

Strengthen and expand youth-centred sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), HIV, tuberculosis (TB), mental health and harm reduction services by improving access to and awareness of innovative HIV prevention approaches and removing existing barriers to uptake.

We need evidence-based interventions to end AIDS by 2030. This means equitably scaling access to existing services and access innovation - such as telehealth, rapid testing, and new promising treatments. Key barriers preventing access to these services - like age barriers locking adolescents out of child- and adult-focused services - must be identified and removed.

Youth-preferred media platforms and messaging must be leveraged to deliver HIV prevention.

