

Multi-Stakeholder Task Force Advocacy Brief

How Communities and Civil Society Can Influence the 2026 UN High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS

Introduction

In accordance with General Assembly resolution [A/RES/80/256](#), the General Assembly will convene a high-level meeting (HLM) on HIV and AIDS on 22 and 23 June 2026 at the UN Headquarters in New York. As part of preparations for the 2026 HLM, an interactive multi-stakeholder hearing (MSH) will be held on 14 May 2026 for representatives of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC, relevant civil society organizations, and other stakeholders.

The 2026 HLM comes at a defining moment for the global HIV response, marked by shifting donor priorities, evolving global health landscape and policy developments that could undermine prior progress. Yet many community-led organizations and civil society groups will not be able to participate in person at the HLM in New York due to financial constraints, visa barriers, limited accreditation opportunities, and tight timelines. With the principle of equitable inclusion, however, absence from New York must not mean absence from influence¹

The Multistakeholder Task Force (MSTF) for the 2026 HLM on HIV and AIDS was established by the PCB NGO Delegation to support inclusive engagement from civil society and communities throughout the HLM preparatory process. To ensure that preparations for the 2026 HLM are grounded in the lived realities, priorities, and advocacy demands of communities most affected by HIV, the MSTF will organize the **Advocacy Week, 15th - 19th May 2026**, after the Multi-Stakeholder Hearing (MSH).

This brief outlines practical strategies communities can use to influence governments, embassies, and UN negotiators before and during the HLM.

What Communities Should Advocate For

While priorities may differ across countries and regions, communities should push governments to support **(this is not an exhaustive list)**:

- Sustainable financing for HIV programs, including adequate and dedicated resourcing for Community-Led Monitoring (CLM) mechanisms and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), and community-led responses
- Protection and expansion of community systems strengthening
- Meaningful involvement of people living with HIV (PLHIV) and affected communities in decision-making spaces, especially of vulnerable populations

- Removal of punitive and discriminatory laws targeting key populations (KPs) and people living with HIV
- Equitable access to HIV prevention, treatment, care, and new technologies, including long-acting prevention tools
- Protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)
- Gender equality and protection from gender-based violence (GBV)
- Community-led monitoring and accountability mechanisms
- Protection of civic space and human rights defenders, including HIV advocates, LGBTIQ+ activists, trans and gender diverse persons, sex worker-led organizations, women's rights organizations, faith-based organizations, HRDs operating in restrictive or conflict-affected environments
- Integration of mental health, economic resilience, and social protection into HIV responses

Opportunities for Communities to Influence the HLM

1. Engage Governments Before Negotiations Begin

As the international community and Member States assess progress against the UNAIDS 2025 interim targets and the commitments of the 2021 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, many governments begin preparing their HLM positions months before the official meeting. Communities should identify their country delegates and engage with them now before national positions become fixed.

Priority targets include:

- Ministries of Health
- Ministries of Foreign Affairs
- National AIDS Councils
- Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCMs)
- Parliamentary health committees
- Permanent Missions to the United Nations
- Country Delegations to the UNAIDS Program Coordinating Board (PCB)
- Relevant Special Procedure Mandate Holders

Communities are highly encouraged to frame their advocacy around both human rights and public health outcomes, demonstrating that community-led responses are essential to achieving national HIV targets.

2. Engage Embassies and Diplomatic Missions

In the lead-up to the HLM, civil society organizations should also engage embassies and diplomatic missions of influential governments, particularly those involved in drafting or negotiating HLM language.

This includes:

- Donor governments funding HIV programs
- Governments leading on gender equality or human rights
- Regional political blocs
- Governments have historically been supportive of key populations and community-led responses

3. Make Use of Digital and Media Advocacy to Build Pressure

Physical absence from New York does not prevent communities from shaping narratives and influencing the HLM.

Civil society organizations can:

- Participate in or follow the MSH (14 May 2026) via the UN Web TV live webcast, and use real-time social media commentary to amplify community voices during each panel discussion
- Organize webinars and community dialogues ahead of the HLM
- Publish press releases and opinion articles
- Use coordinated social media campaigns
- Share videos and testimonies from affected communities
- Conduct media interviews and podcasts
- Host Twitter/X Spaces or Instagram Live discussions
- Tag Member States you would like to influence using social media tags for UN Missions in Geneva and New York.

Digital advocacy should amplify lived experiences and connect national realities to global political commitments.

Communities can also use online advocacy to:

- Hold governments publicly accountable
- Highlight gaps between commitments and implementation
- Mobilize solidarity across countries and regions
- Respond rapidly to developments during negotiations

4. Build Coalitions and Coordinate Advocacy

Coalition advocacy is often more influential than isolated organizational engagement. National, regional, and global networks should work together to:

- Develop joint advocacy priorities
- Coordinate outreach to governments and embassies
- Share intelligence and negotiation updates
- Amplify common messaging
- Organize joint campaigns and statements

Coalitions can also help smaller organizations participate in advocacy processes by sharing platforms, resources, and communication channels.

Particular effort should be made to ensure the inclusion of:

- Young people living with HIV
- Adolescent girls and young women
- Key populations
- Rural and grassroots organizations
- Women-led organizations
- Organizations representing people with disabilities

5. Monitor Negotiations and Respond Quickly

After the MSH, a zero draft of the Political Declaration would be released, and we must monitor it for the inclusion or exclusion of critical language to amplify key issues or commitments.

Some Key Messages for Governments

Communities should consistently reinforce the following messages:

- Community-led responses are essential, cost-effective, and lifesaving
- Human rights and public health are interconnected
- Criminalization undermines HIV outcomes and access to services
- Young people and affected communities must be involved in decisions that affect them
- Sustainable financing for community systems is critical in the context of declining donor funding
- HIV responses cannot succeed without addressing inequality, stigma, discrimination, and gender-based violence
- Accountability mechanisms must include community-led monitoring and measurable targets

Conclusion

The 2026 HLM on HIV/AIDS is a political moment, and the Multi-Stakeholder Task Force is committed to ensuring that communities remain at the forefront. The MSH and the Advocacy Week represent a critical entry point for ensuring that community voices are formally reflected in the preparatory record for the 2026 HLM. Communities do not need to be physically present at the United Nations to influence outcomes. Nothing about communities should be decided without communities.

The MSTF will uphold its core mandate by ensuring that preparations for the 2026 HLM are grounded in the lived realities of community members, support meaningful engagement and use hearing outcomes to inform the 2026 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS.