

Honourable Members of CCPCJ 2022,

On behalf of UNAIDS, it is an honour to join you today for this important, 31st Session of the CCPCJ.

I wish to begin by highlighting the outstanding leadership of UNODC. Under the leadership of Director Ghada Waly, UNODC's commitment to ending AIDS; by supporting the implementation of the Global AIDS Strategy and the implementation of the Nelson Mandela rules, is stronger than ever.

The international community has been through two difficult years of lockdown, morbidity and mortality under COVID. And now tens of millions of Ukrainians are facing the scourge of war, with the reverberations felt around the world.

When member states adopted the Nelson Mandela rules in 2015, it was to, and I quote, "minimize any differences between prison life and life at liberty that tend to lessen the responsibility of the prisoners or the respect due to their dignity as human beings."

So how have we done?

How well have we implemented these rules in these last two years for the 12 million people in held in prison around the world? Where inequalities still limit their access to life savings health services, including HIV prevention, treatment care and support, and COVID vaccines and treatment. This is why people in prison are still six times more likely to be living with HIV than adults in the general population. Because we are not implementing the commitments we have made.

How well have we implemented these rules in the last 80 days of the war for the 48,000 people detained at prisons in Ukraine? There are about 33 prisons in active conflict zones. In this midst of the tragic, senseless war, the international community has a special duty of care to ensure that prisoners in Ukraine, and in Afghanistan, Ethiopia and indeed in any conflict zone, have health and equality under Rule 24, which states that "Prisoners should enjoy the same standards of health care that are available in the community, and should have access to necessary health-care services free of charge without discrimination on the grounds of their legal status." This includes women in prison who are there with their children.

This is why the Global AIDS Strategy calls for decriminalization of key populations – so that people that are the most vulnerable and facing the most acute inequalities do not ever end up in prison. And because, until we ensure the Nelson Mandel Rules, for all prisoners, everywhere, we will not reach SDG3 including our commitment to end AIDS by 2030.

During CCPCJ 2022, UNAIDS encourages you not to focus on what we have not done in the last two years, or the last 80 days, but how we are going to strengthen our work today, with renewed urgency, to keep our commitments to people in prison – to end AIDS and ensure implementation of the Nelson Mandela Rules. At every step of the

way, you can count on the support of UNAIDS Joint Programme to help you implement the commitments you have already taken.

Thank you.