

**XIV WAY GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FEBRUARY 2005**

**MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY VINCENTE FOX QUESADA
PRESIDENT OF MEXICO**

Dear participants of the XIV General Assembly of the World Assembly of Youth

Firstly, I want to extend my sincere congratulations on this occasion of your fourteenth General Assembly. I am convinced that such positive interactions of young people contribute to global development and intercultural understanding.

I congratulate you because you have decided to dedicate this occasion to addressing the problem of HIV/AIDS, and the means in which you can contribute to prevention and raising awareness about the pandemic, which affects millions of youths around the world.

In Mexico, this pandemic has caused a significant number of deaths. Approximately 64 thousand people in the country are living with this disease, and an additional 150 thousand are infected by the virus. Between 1983 and 2002, 40 thousand people died due to HIV/AIDS related illnesses. The disease has provoked stigmatization and consequent discrimination of vulnerable groups.

The Mexican government has undertaken diverse actions to prevent infections and to assist affected people. I am pleased to inform you that through our National Center for the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS (CENSIDA), we have made advances in political and national strategies for prevention, awareness and control of the pandemic. In 2003, we developed antiretroviral medicines for infected persons.

At the international level, Mexico participated in the preparatory process of the UN General Assembly special session on HIV/AIDS in 2001 and presented proposals for the Declaration of Commitments on HIV/AIDS, in particular on the impact of AIDS on women and youth, with special attention on AIDS orphans and the human rights of infected people, to avoid discrimination and stigmatization.

I urge you to continue with the enthusiasm so that concrete actions are taken towards collaboration with your respective governments to address the disease head-on and rise to the challenge.

The contributions you are making will be a great asset in the fight to address the pandemic and advance the promotion of global health and development.

Receive warm greetings from the people of Mexico!