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Laurel Sprague's powerful statement at the inaugural meeting of the Global HIV Prevention Coalition



Remarks delivered by Laurel Sprague, Executive Director of the Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+) on October 10, 2017 at the inaugural meeting of the Global HIV Prevention Coalition in Geneva, Switzerland. The coalition is chaired by the Executive Directors of UNAIDS and UNFPA and brings together United Nations Member States, civil society, international organizations and other partners as part of efforts to reduce new HIV infections by 75% by 2020.

Excellencies and honourable ministers, UN family, NGO partners, and dear community partners and fellow people living with HIV, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about HIV prevention on behalf of GNP+ and people living with HIV.

Without diminishing too much the multiple complexities that people face in the world, I believe we all can acknowledge that life **without** HIV is less challenging for people, families, communities, and countries than life with HIV.

An important role that people living with HIV play in HIV prevention is that we can say two important messages very clearly. The first is that if you test positive for HIV, you will be okay. The second message is that HIV is for life and life is easier – much easier – without HIV.

For those who test positive, there is a further message. It is this: **You will need to learn about and INSIST on good HIV treatment and a life with dignity, no matter how people treat you, how sick you feel, or how much social prejudices make you want to hide – but you can find a community and support.** Everything that you need to survive exists in this world.