

Impact of HIV/AIDS on International Peace and Security

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Statement by H.E. Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations

Mr. President,

Brazil welcomes your initiative of holding this important debate. We also welcome the President of Nigeria, the Deputy President of South Africa and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his statement and to congratulate Mr. Michel Sidibé for his admirable work at the head of UNAIDS.

Mr. President,

The fight against the HIV and AIDS epidemics has been a priority for Brazil in both the domestic and international spheres. We understand all too clearly the menace posed by the epidemics and we have dedicated our political attention and resources to combating it and supporting those living with it.

Internally, our public health system has pioneered HIV and AIDS treatment policies that cover over 600 thousand people living with the virus, including through the provision of anti-retroviral treatment free of charge. As a result, the incidence of HIV in Brazil has stabilized and is now starting to decline.

Internationally, we have helped lead the charge in favor of universal access to affordable medicine. In the General Assembly, the ECOSOC, the World Health Organization, the WTO, and other relevant bodies, we have been a firm voice in favor of a strong and coherent international response to the challenge of HIV and AIDS.

We have sought to share our experience in dealing with the virus with other developing countries through technical cooperation. The setting up of a factory for the production of antiretroviral drugs in Mozambique and the provision of training in dealing with HIV and AIDS to several nations are examples of this cooperation.

In this light, Mr. President, we appreciate Gabon's decision to bring the HIV and AIDS epidemics debate back into the Security Council.

The High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly that begins tomorrow will be a unique opportunity for the United Nations to make a strong political statement and step up the fight against the pandemic.

Brazil is of the view that today's debate is an opportunity for the Council to show support for the General Assembly meeting and to underline its readiness to do its part by addressing HIV and AIDS in the context of international peace and security. In dealing with this issue, the Council should focus on the impact of HIV and AIDS on aspects related to its agenda – conflict and post-conflict situations, peacekeeping operations, and sexual violence in situations of conflict.

Mr. President,

Over the past decade, our understanding of how HIV and AIDS impact security and conflict has evolved considerably. Some of the direst predictions of the past, such as the collapse of entire States due to the epidemics, fortunately did not come to pass. Nevertheless, we have witnessed the many insidious ways in which HIV can magnify conflict and aggravate suffering.

As a cross-cutting issue with an important human rights dimension, HIV and AIDS are complex problems that demand complex solutions. We must address how HIV and AIDS hamper the emergence of sustainable peace and how it affects peacebuilding. We must find creative ways for peacekeeping missions to support local

authorities in combating HIV and AIDS and to help in the fields of prevention, treatment, care, and support to those living with the virus. The human rights components of peacekeeping missions can play an important role in this regard.

The issue of HIV and AIDS is also closely linked to the Council's consideration of women in conflict and post-conflict situations. In particular, the intersection between HIV and AIDS and conflict-related sexual violence is real and troubling. We deplore the grave harm caused to victims of sexual violence who find themselves infected with the virus as a result of such attacks and underline the need for the Council to act to prevent such acts and to help provide assistance to the victims.

We are pleased that the resolution we have adopted today touches on all of those issues and lays the basis for a more systematic analysis of the impact of the epidemics on situations of conflict.

Mr. President,

In closing, I would like to underline that today's debate is part of a larger discussion about how social and economic factors influence the dynamics of conflict.

This is an issue of particular interest to Brazil, which we took up during our Presidency of the Council, in February. We remain convinced that achieving sustainable peace after conflict requires a broad approach that looks beyond security and takes into account the need for populations to fully enjoy development and human rights. The discussion on HIV and AIDS and conflict moves us closer to that goal.

I thank you.