

Impact of HIV/ AIDS on International Peace and Security

7 June 2011, United Nations Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Vitaly Churckin, Permanent Representative of Russia

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (spoke in Russian): We are grateful to you, Mr. President, for having taken the initiative to hold today's very timely meeting of the Security Council, on the eve of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly, where Member States will adopt a comprehensive political declaration on the key areas for a global response to the challenges of HIV/AIDS.

Surmounting that complex threat requires comprehensive and coordinated work by the entire United Nations system. Of particular importance are coherent actions and appropriate distribution of tasks among the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with their prerogatives under the Charter. It is important that the Security Council's actions in that area are incorporated into system-wide efforts. The Council should continue to focus on considering the issue of fighting HIV/AIDS in the context of conflict and post-conflict situations, including during United Nations peacekeeping operations. That is where we see the real added value of its contribution to the collective work of the United Nations.

HIV/AIDS is not a source of conflicts, but conflicts create conditions that contribute to the spread of the epidemic and also complicate efforts to curb it. Affected countries require appropriate and targeted support from the United Nations. In that connection, we welcome the coordination and cooperation between the Secretariat's Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. On the whole, we agree with their approaches and assessments of priority areas for work.

Since the adoption of the milestone resolution 1308 (2000) of the Security Council, some progress has been made. At the same time, the ongoing burden of HIV/AIDS in countries where United Nations peacekeeping operations are under way requires continuous efforts to react to the challenges of the epidemic.

Of particular importance is possible assistance from peacekeepers in efforts by specialized international bodies to prevent HIV/AIDS among the civilian population, to overcome social alienation and discrimination due to HIV/AIDS and to create and build relevant national capacities, in cooperation with national and local governmental bodies and the population. We should look at ways to ensure the continuity of measures begun in the framework of peacekeeping operations during longer-term peacebuilding processes.

We favour additional efforts to reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS for military and civilian staff of United Nations peacekeeping operations. The idea of introducing the posts of HIV/AIDS special advisers and coordinators in peacekeeping operations deserves to be studied. Also significant is working with troop- and police-contributing countries to provide appropriate preparation of personnel before the deployment of missions and to improve relevant national prevention policies and programmes targeting uniformed personnel.

We must be aware that women and children continue to be one of the most vulnerable categories in the context of HIV, particularly in conflict and post-conflict situations. They are frequently either combatants or victims of sexual exploitation by parties to conflict. The epidemic also negatively affects the potential of women to participate in conflict prevention and settlement. A whole range of Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security have laid a solid foundation for work in that area.

The United Nations Secretariat should take appropriate steps to develop approaches and implement measures for United Nations peacekeeping forces to respond to HIV/AIDS. Moreover, the leadership of United Nations missions should carry out practical actions at the country level, in coordination with United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, including the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm that the task of overcoming the global HIV/AIDS epidemic is a priority for Russia. Our country actively participates in international efforts in that area, including as a donor to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. We have contributed \$317 million to the Fund.

In our view, the special role of the United Nations is to mobilize, coordinate and implement a common response to HIV/AIDS. Once again, we emphasize the importance of coordinated actions by all parts of the Organization in that area.