



Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
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Speech

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**Statement to the United Nations Security Council
by
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Mr President,

Thank you for the opportunity to brief you once again on action by UNAIDS, in partnership with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and others, in implementing Resolution 1308 in relation to AIDS and security.

I am particularly pleased to be able to update you during Angola's Presidency of the Council. As you are well aware, Mr President, in many places, the tragic legacy of conflict has been the spread of HIV. But Angola still has the opportunity to avoid the worst of this fate. UNAIDS is redoubling its efforts to work with Angola's leaders to ensure that the 'peace dividend' in Angola does not become the casualty of a more insidious enemy – AIDS.

Mr President,

When the Security Council first considered AIDS in January 2000, and subsequently adopted Resolution 1308, it reshaped the global landscape of the fight against AIDS. The Council's actions laid the groundwork for the prominence given to AIDS as a security issue in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted by the General Assembly in June 2001.

Subsequent resolutions of the Security Council – 1325 in relation to women, 1379 in relation to children, and 1327 concerning the Brahimi report - have all reinforced the determination of the Security Council that global responses to conflict address the AIDS dimension of conflict situations.

I do note with some regret, however, that the Security Council has not taken the opportunity to expressly address AIDS in a number of recent resolutions establishing and extending UN missions, especially given that some of these missions are operating in regions which already have major HIV epidemics.

Nevertheless, the resolve on the part of the Security Council has been integral to winning the support of national governments in responding in more concerted fashion to the threat

of AIDS in the peacekeeping context. But more than that, it has opened the door to UNAIDS working with defence and civil defence forces – ensuring they are integrated into comprehensive national AIDS responses, and it also signalled a need to address the myriad ways AIDS undermines regional and human security.

Mr President,

UNAIDS has addressed AIDS and security in three ways. First, we have taken action in conjunction with Department of Peacekeeping Operations in implementing the aspects of resolution 1308 which relate to peacekeeping forces. Second, we are spearheading a wider response to AIDS among uniformed services. And third, we are helping to ensure that the scale of the global AIDS responses matches the scale of the epidemic, as a pre-eminent humanitarian and security challenge. Let me consider each of these in turn.

First, I reported to you in January 2001 that UNAIDS and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations formalised our collaboration. As a result, we jointly have been able to ensure responses to AIDS have permeated every peacekeeping operation.

Work plans addressing AIDS both within peacekeeping missions and in relation to host populations are being implemented. UNAIDS has assisted DPKO in placing an AIDS policy adviser in major peacekeeping operations. They work with UNAIDS on a daily basis to implement and monitor HIV prevention and care initiatives at mission level. And UNAIDS is also supporting an HIV policy adviser in DPKO headquarters.

UNAIDS has supported the establishment and operations of DPKO's HIV/AIDS Trust Fund, both in resource mobilization and in providing technical advice on its funded activities. Among these will be a major survey of peacekeepers' knowledge, attitudes and practice, which will for the first time establish a comprehensive information base for the targeting and evaluation of HIV activities. We have produced an HIV/AIDS awareness card, with a pocket where a condom can be made available. It has been produced in ten languages so far, with Chinese soon to be added. We are providing 50,000 cards per year to peacekeeping missions and to troop-contributing countries for use in pre-deployment training.

In November 2001 I established an Expert Panel on HIV testing and UN Peacekeeping Missions, chaired by Australian High Court judge, the Honourable Michael Kirby, and with wide participation of uniformed services, as well as DPKO. Its report has informed the formulation of DPKO policy, and I am heartened to see that DPKO is clarifying its policy on testing to support more extensive use of voluntary HIV counselling and testing in the context of peacekeeping missions.

However, it is also true that countries hosting peacekeeping missions are increasingly calling for the mandatory testing of peacekeeping troops. I remain convinced that this is a problem better solved upstream than downstream – that is, with sound and non-discriminatory policies in place which respect confidentiality and deter stigma, voluntary HIV testing should be a normal part of defence-force operations, and it is equally important that access to voluntary HIV testing and counselling is integrated into AIDS-response measures among populations in the countries hosting peacekeepers.

While we have made undoubted progress in responding to AIDS as it has an impact on peacekeeping operations, major challenges remain.

One, we are still hampered by a lack of reliable data, and so UNAIDS is ensuring that we have baseline measures and the capacity to measure progress against them.

Two, AIDS-responses among peacekeepers need to be backed up by concerted leadership,

as a matter of international solidarity. Many leaders are engaged, but more need to be – Defence Ministers worldwide ought have AIDS on their radar screens.

And three, sustainability is a major challenge – peacekeepers are rotated through their missions in relatively short timeframes, which makes imperative that mission responses are reinforced in the ongoing programmes of uniformed services.

So, Mr President, let me turn to the wider issue of uniformed services.

Peacekeepers are drawn from, and demobilized to, national uniformed services. By working with uniformed services, in both troop-contributing and other countries, we establish the norms of conduct for uniformed personnel, and model effective AIDS response activities.

UNIADS is working extensively with armed forces to ensure HIV awareness and prevention education takes place prior to deployment and is reinforced at demobilization. At least 38 countries worldwide now have a national strategy addressing AIDS in uniformed services, which was one of the goals of Resolution 1308.

UNAIDS, including our Cosponsors - especially UNFPA, UNODC, UNDP, WHO and UNICEF - is engaged in approximately 50 countries world wide, working with young recruits, peacekeepers, police, and immigration officers in the prevention of HIV and to strengthen HIV care. We have produced key tools – programming guides and a peer education kit. Young recruits are a particular focus, because like other young adults, they are those primarily at risk.

One aim has been to institutionalise training on AIDS into training curricula for uniformed services – as has been achieved in Ukraine’s defence forces, with support from UNAIDS, especially UNFPA. Similar efforts have targeted border guards in West Bengal, military and police forces in Uruguay, and are beginning among law enforcement agencies in the Russian Federation and Belarus.

In order to allow wider lessons to be drawn, UNAIDS is publishing case studies of HIV prevention and care among armed forces and UN peacekeepers in Eritrea, and shortly Ukraine and Thailand.

In keeping with UNAIDS’ increased emphasis on women and AIDS, we have placed special emphasis on recruiting gender advisers in conflict and post-conflict situations. Thus far, gender advisers have been placed in Sierra Leone, Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Complementing the emphasis on uniformed services, we have intensified our actions targeting all United Nations system staff. The AIDS awareness card for peacekeepers is being adapted for use among all humanitarian workers, and the uniformed services peer education kit is serving as a model to extend HIV-related peer education to all UN staff.

Mr President,

Third and finally, let me just mention briefly the wider context in which AIDS constitutes a threat to global security, as presaged in Resolution 1308 but also extending further.

In the worst affected regions, AIDS now constitutes a full-blown crisis of human capacity. It is profoundly exacerbating economic instability and food insecurity, and will increasingly cause state failure. The coming generation of orphans and young people is

scarred by AIDS, and requires unprecedented support to avoid reproducing the conditions of insecurity and HIV-spread on an even larger scale for the next generation.

In response, a new global consensus is emerging on the need to marry emergency support with fundamental strengthening of all the elements of AIDS resilience – secure food supplies, reduced poverty, increased access to education, empowerment of women, and accessible HIV care. However, we are in a race against time – to make progress in delivering this new hope faster than the epidemic erodes security in the broad sense of the term.

In consequence, UNAIDS is redoubling its efforts, bringing together the UN system in a joint and focussed effort, delivering stronger support to national AIDS responses, and helping to mobilize the human, technical and financial resources which must be deployed against the epidemic. While part of our action is directed at regions where the epidemic is newly emerging and so most containable, such as Eastern Europe and across Asia, we also need to attend to those states where AIDS has so eroded national capacity that massive and coordinated delivery of ‘emergency development’ is needed to stave off state collapse.

Mr President,

When the Security Council first considered AIDS in January 2000 it was breaking new ground. What the Council achieved then has been of lasting merit. It set in train a process which has enabled us to place peacekeepers and uniformed services in the forefront of effective global AIDS responses.

In the new year, I look forward to presenting to you a detailed progress report on our implementation activities in relation to Resolution 1308 and related action. However, the extent of action among peacekeepers and uniformed services is already evident.

HIV represents a challenge to every one of the 42,000 soldiers and police officers under UN command. Many are serving in high-prevalence regions – a third are in Africa – and all face the strain of separation from families and stressful working conditions. Unless the HIV challenge is met, the sustainability of these operations, and their invaluable contribution to global security – will be under threat.

But for the personnel involved, a peacekeeping mission is only a relatively small part of their career. We cannot rely only on HIV education efforts delivered in the context of peacekeeping operations. I urge Member States to ensure that all uniformed services, including future and returning peacekeepers, are able to participate in ongoing HIV programmes.

Our goal, pursued jointly with DPKO, is a simple one. We want to ensure that peacekeepers and all uniformed personnel are leaders in the fight against AIDS, not its victims. And by acting simultaneously on prevention, care and impact mitigation, we can stop the epidemic’s corrosive impact on security.

AIDS is not only the great moral challenge of our time, it is also a massive barrier to development, the cause of economic crisis and a fundamental threat to security and to the basic social stability of many nations. I thank the Security Council for the part you have played in recognizing and meeting this challenge, and look to your continued leadership in doing so.

Thank you.

