

Impact of HIV/ AIDS on International Peace and Security

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***Statement by Mr. Li Baodong, Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations***

I would like to thank Gabon for its initiative in organizing today's meeting, and to welcome President Bongo Ondimba in coming to preside over it. I also wish to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Mr. Michel Sidibé, for their statements.

HIV/AIDS poses a serious threat to human life. In recent years, thanks to the joint efforts of the international community, great progress has been made in the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. However, there are still more than 60 million people worldwide living with or infected with HIV/AIDS. The situation is especially serious in sub-Saharan Africa. In some countries in conflict or post-conflict situations, poverty, lack of medical facilities and massive population displacement are all factors likely to worsen the spread of HIV/AIDS, which in turn affects the economic development and social stability of the countries concerned.

I would like to make four points.

First, it is important to strengthen international cooperation and implement in earnest the relevant declarations and resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council. In 2001 the General Assembly held a special session on HIV/AIDS and adopted a Declaration of Commitment (resolution S-26/2). Tomorrow, the Assembly will once again hold a high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS and will adopt a set of outcome documents. Since 2000, the discussion of HIV/AIDS in the Council has also raised the profile of this issue on the international agenda. Now the international community must translate commitments into concrete action and make greater efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Secondly, developed countries must honour their commitments effectively and provide the necessary financial and technical assistance to developing countries. HIV/AIDS medicines, treatment and care are costly, and developing countries face serious difficulties with their HIV/AIDS response in terms of financing and technology. The developed countries should therefore extend a helping hand to them. International organizations and funds, including the United Nations, must strengthen their cooperation and assist developing countries, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa, in their fight against HIV/AIDS.

Thirdly, it is important to give special attention to the issue of AIDS in countries in conflict or post-conflict situations. The Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission must give adequate attention to the needs of the countries on their agenda with regard to dealing with HIV/AIDS.

In addition, the consequences of HIV/AIDS must be fully taken into account when drawing up plans for post-conflict reconstruction, security sector reform and the reintegration of former combatants. Finally, it is important to strengthen the United Nations HIV/AIDS response within its peacekeeping operations. China welcomes the initiatives taken by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, as called for by the Council in its resolutions, to enhance awareness about HIV/AIDS among peacekeepers and to amend the code of conduct for peacekeepers. We wish also to see continued cooperation and coordination between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNAIDS.