

## Impact of HIV/ AIDS on International Peace and Security

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### ***Statement by Mr. Néstor Osorio, Permanent Representative of Colombia***

I wish to join my colleagues, Mr. President, in expressing appreciation for your presence here to preside over the Security Council and lead this debate on the most tragic pandemic that humankind has experienced. I would also like to convey my respectful greetings to the President of Nigeria, the Deputy President of South Africa and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, who are here with us today. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and extensive report (A/65/797) and Mr. Michel Sidibé, as well as his team, for his commitment and dedication at the head of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

The figures on the devastating consequences of AIDS are alarming: 30 million dead and 34 million living with HIV worldwide is a frightening thing. Today, however, it is encouraging to hear that prevention strategies are paying off and that, between 2001 and 2009, the global rate of new HIV infections fell by almost 25 per cent.

However, the reduction in international investments at a time when the AIDS response is having results is of concern. The shortfall in resources foreseen by UNAIDS for 2015 jeopardizes the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 6, in particular the target on reducing new infections.

We hope that the agreement to be reached in the framework of the high-level meeting that the General Assembly will begin tomorrow will reflect the urgency of securing the necessary resources to maintain that positive trend and to make the goal of achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2015 a reality.

The opposite would be a setback to the commitments of the heads of State and Government reflected in the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS to ensure the availability of additional funds for countries to have access to predictable and sustainable financial resources; to ensure that international funding is consistent with national plans and strategies on HIV and AIDS; and to increase investment in research and the development of safe and affordable drugs, products and new technologies.

My country is convinced that the fight against HIV and AIDS benefits from an approach based on respect for human rights and the safeguarding of human dignity. It is necessary to redouble efforts to eradicate the stigma and discrimination that affected populations still suffer, and that are an obstacle to controlling the epidemic. It is also necessary to strengthen sexual education programmes that are based on respect for human rights and to encourage the exercise of sexual and reproductive rights with a clear gender perspective and respect for differences.

That approach should be accompanied by the adequate provision of quality and timely social services. Given that the poorest communities are more vulnerable, preventive strategies should be considered not only as HIV and AIDS projects, but primarily as development projects that have a lasting impact on the epidemic. However, national efforts are not enough without the technical and financial cooperation of the international community. The joint work of States and international cooperation agencies is essential to overcome the gaps in access that still exist, to address the most vulnerable populations, to implement comprehensive preventive strategies, to ensure adequate supplies for diagnosis and treatment and to strengthen epidemiological studies.

The Secretary-General notes a reduction in the number of countries that allow flexible rules in intellectual property rights standards and an increase in bilateral and regional agreements that can undermine the capacities of countries to develop access to essential medicines. In that regard, bearing in mind that the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights does not prevent Member States from taking measures to protect public health, the international community should reaffirm its commitment to interpreting and implementing the Agreement in such a way as to support the right to protect public health and, in particular, to promote access to medicines, including the production of generic anti-retrovirals and other essential drugs to combat AIDS-related infections.

Colombia recognizes that the magnitude of the HIV epidemic requires comprehensive and coordinated action by the international community and that the actions of the United Nations system to provide a comprehensive response to the epidemic should continue to be discussed and agreed within the General Assembly as the Organization's universal body. However, in the context of the responsibilities under the Charter, the Security Council can play an important role in the promotion and integration of prevention programmes, treatment, care and support during the implementation of the tasks assigned to peacekeeping operations and in ensuring the continuity of such strategies during post-conflict transition and peacebuilding processes.

We appreciate the holding of this important debate as an opportunity to review the progress made on implementing previous mandates. We also endorse resolution 1983 (2011) as a strong sign of renewed political will to improve the global response to the HIV epidemic, to reduce vulnerability and to strengthen cooperation to achieve the goal of zero new infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.