



BRAZIL

Statement by His Excellency Mr. Alexandre Padilha
Minister of Health of Brazil

High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS

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Mr. President,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the members of the Foreign Policy and Global Health Initiative – Brazil, France, Indonesia, Norway, Senegal, South Africa and Thailand.

Our countries comprise many regional groups, diverse cultures and different levels of development. We agreed that impact on health should be a point of departure and a defining lens to be used to formulate our international policies and development strategies. In particular, we have committed to speed up and strengthen the implementation of existing commitments on HIV/AIDS in all its dimensions, including those related to human rights and health.

Universal access to treatment, care and support are essential instruments to fight HIV/AIDS, but they are not sufficient. They should be systematically accompanied with prevention activities and policies that promote and protect human rights – an essential pillar of the HIV/AIDS response. To this end, increased global funding and better use and sustained resources are critical.

We believe that a public health environment free from discrimination is a fundamental tool to achieve universal access. The right not to be discriminated constitutes not only a Human right in itself, but, in the HIV/AIDS context, an effective tool in curbing the epidemic. **Stigma and discrimination prevents people from accessing to diagnosis and treatment. Stigma contributes to the spread of the disease. It is a matter of choosing between a virtuous or a vicious circle.**

In this context, we welcome the adoption by the Human Rights Council of the resolution on the protection of human rights in the context of HIV/AIDS. We also reaffirm our support to the UNAIDS Zero Vision and WHO HIV/AIDS strategy for 2011–2015 recently adopted by the World Health Assembly.

Mr. President,

Our group has been underscoring the need to consider a gender approach perspective in all policies and actions. Women and girls must be protected against HIV/AIDS all through their life course and involved in the identification and analysis of necessary measures to ensure this. The involvement and participation of those living with HIV, the most vulnerable and particularly women and young people, is essential. **We welcome the Call for Action as endorsed at the Bamako Young Leadership in the HIV/AIDS Response Conference facilitated by UNAIDS.**

Our group recognizes the crucial link between AIDS and maternal and child health and stresses the need to strengthen health systems in developing countries to eliminate transmission of HIV from mother to child.

Special attention must also be given to vulnerable populations to HIV infection in general. It is crucial that national plans address their specificities through specific policies, particularly in terms of prevention and treatment. This is particularly relevant in times of conflict or natural disasters. Prisoners' Free access to prevention and medicines is also critical.

Access to medicines is essential in realizing the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including for people living with HIV. **Special international action such as taking advantage of TRIPS flexibilities must be taken to ensure access to affordable generic and new-generation antiretrovirals and other drugs.**

We urge all Member-States to remain engaged in the HIV/AIDS response. The report of the SG provided us with an opportunity to advance our views and priorities and, most importantly, to further exercise reflection and self-criticism. We believe that a public health environment free from discrimination and addressing social context surrounding HIV/AIDS are fundamental tools to achieve universal access.

Brazil will be hosting the WHO-First World Conference on Social Determinants of Health, in October, in Rio de Janeiro. Social determinants are critical to help put in place an environment that is filled with human respect and basic needs for all to flourish in equity.

Mr. President,

I would like to take this opportunity to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

In Brazil, during these thirty years of fighting AIDS we have registered considerable advances thanks to our national public health system – “SUS”.

SUS has allowed Brazil to develop universal access to diagnosis, treatment and care. SUS has allowed equitable policies, respectful of human rights, on prevention and treatment that reach out to all groups that live in situations of vulnerability, such as men who have sex with men, sex workers and injectable drug users.

We will fail to combat situations of vulnerability to AIDS if we ignore them. The World will fail to combat AIDS if we try to exclude these situations from our maps.

SUS has allowed people living with HIV, populations living in vulnerable situations, and other civil society to have a firm say in the fight against AIDS. SUS has built a permanent dialog that contributes to assert Human Rights, and citizenship.

The struggle against AIDS is also the struggle to overcome the challenges to financial sustainability. More affordable drugs at fair prices, in accordance with the economic situation of the country, constitute one of the key pillars of this policy. The full implementation of the TRIPS flexibilities, as agreed upon in the Doha Declaration and the WHO Global Strategy on Public Health, Innovation, and Intellectual Property, is a powerful and effective tool to accomplish universal access targets. **We had global political leadership to establish all this mechanisms, in the past. We must have now the GLOBAL political leadership to move them forward.**

In Brazil, we have explored a number of options to reduce the cost of essential medicines to treat HIV/AIDS. All this is done in a transparent way, within the legal framework, through good faith negotiations with pharmaceutical companies. **But we do encourage local production and technology incorporation, otherwise universal access are not sustainable.**

Mr. President,

Financing is another key element in the global fight against HIV/AIDS, particularly in developing countries. Increased global funding and innovative financing mechanisms have a crucial role to play.

With this in mind, Brazil co-founded UNITAID, in 2006. It has succeeded in significantly reducing prices of second and third line antiretrovirals and pediatric formulations. **I am very pleased to inform this distinguished audience that the Brazilian Congress has just approved a government initiative that guarantees additional and permanent funding, based on a levy on air tickets, that will increase our contribution to UNITAID.**

Cooperation is also an innovative mechanism for our targets. My country has several HIV/AIDS cooperation initiatives with other developing countries partners. In the South-South Ties initiative, we provide support to a number of Latin American and African countries. Brazil has also partnered with Mozambique in the construction of a pioneer pharmaceutical plant for the production of generic antiretroviral drugs.

We are ready to improve our cooperation and support. But let me be clear:

Brazil's and other developing countries cooperation came to add on to the existing flows, not to substitute them! We must not retreat from any front in the battle against HIV/AIDS.

Mr. President,

From the Brazilian perspective, there is a broad consensus of the importance of integrating HIV into the wider public health and development agendas. There is a need to link the HIV response to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as the overall approach to strengthening health systems.

Universal access to early diagnosis, optimal treatment and prevention with a human rights perspective must be the effective goals to be achieved by 2015.

Thank you