

**HIV/AIDS and international peacekeeping operations**  
**19 January 2001**

**Mr. Neewoor** (Mauritius): We thank you, honourable Minister, for presiding over this important meeting today. We also welcome the Minister of International Development of Norway and thank her for her participation in the discussion today.

We wish to thank Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Dr. Peter Piot, Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) for their important briefings this morning.

The open meeting of the Security Council today on the theme “The responsibility of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security: HIV/AIDS and international peacekeeping operations” is a timely event, in our view, for two distinct reasons. First, the AIDS pandemic continues to take a heavy toll of human lives daily across the world, leaving in its wake destitution and despair in millions of homes. The HIV/AIDS tragedy has afflicted the African continent more severely than anywhere else. Communities have been wiped out wholesale; valuable human resources so essential for the social and economic development of nations have fallen victim, leaving behind voids not easy to fill. I can only reiterate what has been said on so many occasions before — that African Governments need a much larger measure of international support and assistance as they grapple relentlessly with the deadly AIDS pandemic with their limited resources.

In July last year the Security Council adopted resolution 1308 (2000), in which the impact of HIV/AIDS on societies and nations was brought into focus, and several measures have been recommended to be taken by relevant United Nations agencies and at national levels aimed at containing the pandemic. It also addresses the risk factor for men and women deployed in United Nations peacekeeping operations. We commend all the efforts undertaken by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in creating awareness among its personnel on the seriousness of the issue. However, these efforts need to be further intensified, as well as complemented by the initiatives of the troop-contributing countries to better prepare their troops by training them in and informing them on the preventive measures necessary in the field.

More importantly, the resolution recognizes for the first time that HIV/AIDS has impacts on the stability and security of nations and societies. The work carried out by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Medical Support Unit in tandem has been most encouraging not only from a training point of view, but as a joint effort to act as a facilitator in testing and counselling individuals affected by the virus. Obviously, we know that there remains a great deal to do, as mentioned both by Mr. Guéhenno and Dr. Piot today.

The second reason why we regard today's open meeting of the Security Council, devoted to the AIDS issue, as timely is that it is an opportunity for us to express our appreciation and thanks to Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, on this day when he completes his tenure as Permanent Representative, not only for his initiative of placing the HIV/AIDS question on the Security Council agenda for the first time in January 2000, during the United States Council presidency, but also for the impetus he provided, under which President Clinton, Vice-President Al Gore and the United States Congress came forward to commit substantial new funds to help fight HIV/AIDS. In this regard, we recall particularly the order signed by President Clinton last year to encourage the United States pharmaceutical industry to bring down the costs of medicine for treatment of HIV/AIDS sold in Africa.

Ambassador Holbrooke undoubtedly has made a significant contribution to raising awareness about HIV/AIDS through his action at the United Nations. We thank him warmly as we wish him well in his future endeavours. We thank him, finally, for having been a good friend of Africa and my country during his tenure and for his very frank and candid statement in this Chamber this morning, covering a host of very important issues of concern to the international community.

Fortunately, there are drugs today that help in the treatment of HIV/AIDS, and the use of such drugs has already brought about a marked decline in the incidence of AIDS in the industrialized nations. The initiative President Clinton has taken to help bring down the costs of drugs in Africa for HIV/AIDS treatment may not necessarily make the drugs cheap enough and affordable for all in the near future, but it is an important step in that direction. Similar initiatives need to be taken to cover all developing nations and, more importantly, to ensure access by all HIV victims to life-saving medication at reasonable costs. We also believe that international financial institutions that have the resources at their disposal need to do a lot more, in concert with the United Nations system, in the global battle against HIV/AIDS.