



*Misión Permanente de Costa Rica ante las Naciones Unidas*

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
60th SESSION**

**SPECIAL SESSION OF HIV/AIDS**

**Statement of H.E. Mrs. Lidieth Carballo Quesada**

**HEAD OF DELEGATION  
VICE-MINISTER OF HEALTH OF COSTA RICA**

*New York, 2 June 2006*

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary General,

Excellencies

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the Honorable Mrs. Leslie Ramsammy, Minister of Health of the Republic of Guyana on behalf of the Rio Group. Furthermore, I would like to make some remarks on some points that are special interest for my country.

Costa Rica is a country which has historically stood out for its respect for Human Rights through concrete actions. .

The first cases of AIDS in the country were reported in the early 1980s. According to the UNAIDS classification, this type of epidemic is considered to be concentrated and of low prevalence. Its frequency is higher in the male population, among those between the ages of 30 to 54 with an increasing tendency in both the adolescent and female populations with a ratio of 5.4 males for each female. The urban area, particularly the metropolitan area, registers a higher number of cases.

The work being done in the country on this issue is coordinated across sectors and institutions. Thus, the government, civil society, and cooperation agencies join efforts to offer the services needed by persons who live with HIV/AIDS, within the framework of the country's international commitments such as the Commitment Declaration of UNGASS, the "Three Ones" in order to guarantee the "4 Ps."

Since September 1997, Costa Rica guarantees ARV treatment to 100% of the population. Furthermore, efforts are undertaken to provide holistic care to persons with HIV/AIDS and their families and to strengthen promotion and health education programs.

Among the more significant advances that I would like to share with you are:

- The promulgation of the General Law of HIV/AIDS 7771, which since April 1998, protects the rights of persons who live with HIV/AIDS.
- The creation of the National Council of HIV/AIDS Holistic Care, CONASIDA, which is the governing body for national policy and action on issues of HIV/AIDS, and
- The elaboration of the National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS Care, which is the framework that guides actions in education, health promotion, prevention, epidemiological awareness, clinical care and HIV/AIDS research.
- In like manner, we have been able to advance in prevention together with the officers of the Public Safety Ministry, the youth, and the community at risk.
- Currently, a Communication Campaign is being developed with the support of the International Fund.
- The strengthening of the Epidemiological Alertness System.
- The strengthening of the country's analysis capacity of HIV serological samples
- The elaboration of projects directed to the education and prevention of HIV/AIDS among vulnerable groups and the population in general on issues such as the end of discrimination, prevention forms, and testing during pregnancy, among others.

We have undertaken the above actions in coordination with civil society and agencies and organizations of international cooperation.

Mr. President

Since we deem treatment of the sick insufficient, Costa Rica, like many other countries, undertakes innumerable efforts to move forward and strengthen endeavors in education and prevention with an emphasis on the most vulnerable groups, using a gender perspective, and advocating for holistic sexual and reproductive health. We need to give our citizens the tools so that they may be decision-makers able to confront discrimination, promote and defend their human rights, diminish transmission through sexual contact, intravenous drug use and vertical transmission, among others.

As we recognize the importance of migratory flows, both for countries of origin and of destination, it is worth noting their impact on issues of HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment particularly in developing countries, such as Costa Rica, that guarantee universal access to health services to all its inhabitants without discrimination.

Thus, we reiterate that international cooperation, bilateral and multilateral, is a fundamental keystone in achieving the goals of universal access to holistic care with equity and solidarity.

Mr. President,

We are aware that the challenge is great. But we are confident that through our endeavors, civil society participation, and international cooperation support we will meet the Millennium Goal that we have adopted as an international commitment.

Thank you very much.