

UNAIDS BRIEFS SECURITY COUNCIL ON PROGRESS OF HISTORIC AIDS AND SECURITY RESOLUTION

UNAIDS Executive Director says progress made in educating peacekeepers on HIV and AIDS; calls for expanded HIV testing services and intensified effort in addressing AIDS and security in long term

New York, 18 July 2005 – Today UNAIDS Executive Director Dr Peter Piot briefed the United Nations Security Council and encouraged stronger international cooperation to develop long-term strategies for HIV prevention, testing and counseling, and HIV treatment for personnel being deployed in international peacekeeping operations as well as national uniformed services. UNAIDS today also released a report entitled, *On the Front Line*, which outlines progress in this area.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1308 was a landmark resolution adopted in July 2000, in which the Security Council recognized for the first time the potential threat of AIDS on stability and security and called on the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to work with Member States to address AIDS among peacekeepers and national uniformed services. Over the past five years, UNAIDS has supported Member States to implement the resolution at international, regional and national levels.

“The world’s response to AIDS has gathered such strength that for the first time ever we have a real opportunity to get ahead of this epidemic,” said Dr Peter Piot during the Security Council session. “Although we have made significant inroads in educating peacekeepers and national uniformed services about the risks of HIV, AIDS is still not part of core military business everywhere.”

According to the UNAIDS progress report, key milestones since 2000 include increased collaboration between UNAIDS and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in making sure comprehensive HIV prevention efforts are part of all UN peacekeeping missions. Currently all major peacekeeping operations have full-time AIDS advisers and smaller missions have AIDS focal points.

Over one million AIDS awareness cards in 13 languages, featuring basic information about HIV prevention and condoms, have been distributed among peacekeepers and national security forces. And a peer education kit is becoming an integral part of the military training in several countries that provide peacekeeping troops.

Resolution 1308 paved the way for UNAIDS to engage uniformed services as key partners in the response to AIDS. UNAIDS is today assisting 53 Member States with comprehensive programmes to address AIDS amongst uniformed services. As part of this work, UNAIDS has signed partnership agreements with 15 Ministries of Defense, most recently with the Indian Government, covering about 1.3 million active uniformed personnel.

However, key challenges remain, including the need to expand access to HIV testing as well as ensuring AIDS programmes are sustained even in times of conflict. Evidence clearly demonstrates that the provision of voluntary confidential counseling and testing services are far more likely to result in favourable behaviour change than mandatory testing.

As requested by the Security Council, UNAIDS is leading international efforts to build the evidence base for action to tackle the long term impact of AIDS on the stability and security of countries. "AIDS can erode the ability of countries to govern themselves and to provide essential services to its citizens," said Dr Piot. "We must address the broader impact of AIDS on human security and national stability in the most affected countries particularly those in conflict and post-conflict situations."

The new UNAIDS report, *On the Front Line*, is available at www.unaids.org.

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