

**STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF ECOSOC
H.E. AMBASSADOR SYLVIE LUCAS,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF LUXEMBOURG
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ECOSOC ANNUAL MINISTERIAL REVIEW REGIONAL MINISTERIAL
MEETING ON HIV AND DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE
CARIBBEAN**

**Montego Bay, Jamaica
5th - 6th June 2009**

Mr. Prime Minister,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would first like to commend the Government of Jamaica for hosting this Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Economic and Social Council's Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) to examine the challenges of HIV and development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Government and people of Jamaica for their kind hospitality, as well as the United Nations System organisations that have helped organize this event.

It is an honour for me to take part in this important meeting, which I believe will contribute significantly to the work of the Council on public health. As you know, the theme of this year's Review, which will take place in Geneva in a month time, is "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health".

The nexus between health and development is well-known. It is all too clear in the case of HIV, which is not only a global public health issue, but has also various social and economic dimensions and poses a significant challenge to development. This consultation can play an important role in analyzing the gaps, challenges, and way

forward in responding to HIV in Latin America and the Caribbean and achieving sustained progress towards the internationally agreed development goals. Its conclusions can also provide an impetus to re-energize efforts ahead of the target date of realizing universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010.

Excellencies,

ECOSOC was mandated the task of the Annual Ministerial Review at the 2005 World Summit. Its primary purpose is to track progress, scale-up efforts, and accelerate action towards the achievement of the development agenda, broadly reflected in the Millennium Development Goals by the 2015 target deadline.

This regional ministerial meeting is the fourth in a series of preparatory events for the 2009 Review, whose key messages are highly relevant both to today's dialogue and to our upcoming deliberations in Geneva. The first regional meeting, held in Sri Lanka, focused on the theme "Financing strategies for healthcare". A central message from Colombo was the importance to pursue not only "more money for health, but also more health for the money", "learning to do more with less".

The next meeting, which took place in China, addressed ways to promote health literacy. A key message from Beijing was that the enormous undertaking of improving progress on the health goals cannot be shouldered solely by the health sector. Effective collaboration among different sectors is crucial to enhancing peoples' ability to obtain and comprehend health information. This message, including the value of using the media and communication technologies to impart that information, will be shared with the international community at the regional meeting for Africa on the topic of "eHealth-information and communication technology for health" in Ghana next week.

Last month, the Government of Qatar hosted a meeting on "Addressing non-communicable diseases and injuries". This meeting made clear that the growing burden of non-communicable diseases and injuries globally - 60 % of deaths globally - requires greater attention of Member States on the urgency to respond to it and find cost-effective

solutions for prevention and control. The required attention and efforts must complement those directed to communicable diseases, such as HIV.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have faced several HIV epidemics, from generalized to mostly concentrated epidemics throughout the region. Responses have varied but one lesson is clear: health outcomes are largely determined by factors outside the health sector.

The political commitment and leadership has helped achieve significant gains, especially in providing life-saving treatment and preventing Mother-to-Child transmission of HIV. There is now need to build on that leadership to overcome the remaining challenges in order to curb the continued spread of the epidemic.

How to strengthen prevention, address stigma and discrimination, secure access of the most at risk and of vulnerable groups to necessary services, protect women and girls from HIV and strengthen a multi-sectoral response to address the social drivers of the epidemic? These are some of the main challenges faced by the countries in this region, but also in other parts of the world.

Please allow me to put, for one moment, my national hat on. Luxembourg attaches great importance to adequate health standards, both at the national and international level. We attribute some 20 % of our global ODA to health and the fight against HIV/AIDS constitutes one of the priorities that we have identified for our interventions in international cooperation. Our main partners in this context are WHO, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF and the Global Fund.

We realize that this epidemic is, unfortunately, here to stay for many years to come. We need therefore to create the structures at the global level to meet this challenge, and that's also why my Government decided in 2007 to support the initiative "aids2031" launched by UNAIDS, aiming at developing a sustainable, multi-sectoral, global strategy.

The final report “an agenda for the future” is supposed to be presented at the end of this year.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am eager to learn from the analysis that will come out of these discussions among the wide-range of stakeholders that are present here. But I am even more eager to hear concrete, specific policy recommendations and initiatives that could be replicated in other countries of the region, and that we could share with the broad membership in Geneva. Thus we can hope to make a difference in the life of millions of people at risk.

I thank you for your attention.