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BRASIL

FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOME OF THE TWENTY-SIXTY SPECIAL SESSION:
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT ON HIV/AIDS

High Level Segment

June 2nd 2006

Statement by Ambassador Celso Amorim
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil

Mr. President,

The 2001 Declaration of Commitment was a turning-point in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Contrary to the prevailing views at that time, the international community realized that an effective strategy to confront the pandemic had to include access to treatment – along with prevention, care and support.

It also became clear that the cost of treatment should be no impediment to the access of poor people, especially in developing countries, to life-saving drugs. I want to pay tribute to the Secretary General for his vision and leadership in this regard.

Those two assumptions have long been evident to Brazil. Ever since the first retroviral drugs appeared, we have adopted the policy of universal treatment. Drugs have been provided for free to all those who need them.

The World Bank had estimated that 1,2 million people would have been infected in Brazil by the year 2000. The adoption of a policy based on free and universal treatment led to a significant reduction in those estimates and the number of infected people is actually 600 thousand. The number of AIDS related death was also reduced by 50%.

Mr. President,

Since 2001, the response to the pandemic worldwide has become more consistent.

However, treatment remains a major challenge. The momentum created by the 3 by 5 Initiative has guided us towards a more ambitious goal: Universal Access to Treatment, Prevention, Care and Support by 2010.

I wish to congratulate UNAIDS and its Director General for their work in this direction.

To ensure the success of this initiative, we need to encourage production of anti-retroviral drugs and active ingredients in developing countries. We should take advantage of the flexibilities provided in the Doha Ministerial Declaration and subsequent agreements on TRIPS and Public Health.

The issue of affordability is crucial. We recognize the importance of intellectual property rights. But no right of a commercial nature can be upheld to the detriment of the right to life and health.

We must encourage bilateral, regional and international efforts in promoting bulk procurement, price negotiations and licensing to lower prices for HIV prevention and treatment.

Together with France, Chile, Norway and other interested countries, Brazil has been engaged in an initiative to create an International Drug Purchase Facility. Its main