



Kingdom of Belgium

**HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON HIV/AIDS
UNGASS+5
NEW YORK, JUNE 2, 2006**

Statement by H.E. Mr. Johan Verbeke,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Belgium to the United Nations

(Please check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Belgium fully endorses the speech delivered by Minister Ursula Haubner on behalf of the European Union and its member states.

In assessing the progress made during the first years of the fight against HIV/AIDS we recognise the importance of a balanced approach between prevention, treatment and care, without forgetting research. In this respect Belgium would like to stress the two following points.

First, Belgium unconditionally supports the joint UNICEF/UNAIDS campaign.

- Prevention of the mother-to-child transmission of the infection must be accessible to all.
- We must develop and guarantee access to paediatric forms of medicines and testing.
- We must step up the campaign of prevention, in particular towards young people.
- We must take care of the children who are victims of HIV/AIDS or who are affected by the social consequences of the pandemic.

Second, Belgium insists – and will continue to do so – on the need to improve prevention. Without a non-discriminatory prevention and detection policy based on respect for human rights, no treatment or care policy can be effective. This was stressed by the European Union in its Declaration adopted on December 1, 2005, at the occasion of the International AIDS Day.

Prevention of contamination by HIV must use methods with proven efficiency. Separately implementing a few isolated actions is simply not enough.

Prevention implies first universal access for women, men, young people, male and female sex workers, men who have sex with men, drug users – and in particular people infected by HIV/AIDS - to a full scope of information and services regarding reproductive health.

Prevention also implies delivering accessible and integrated services regarding the promotion of sexual and reproductive health.

This also implies the continuation and improvement of medical research in order to develop microbicides and vaccines that will eventually allow us to live in a world without AIDS.

One must also ensure a reliable access to essential commodities in the field of sexual and reproductive health, and of drug use and treatment. For sexual and reproductive health, this means full access to male and female condoms, and for drug users access to substitution therapies and clean injection needles and syringes.

Of course, prevention also relies on education, on the transmission of behaviour patterns, on sexual education. One must reinforce security for all children; reinforce protection against violence, rape, unwanted pregnancies and against sexually transmitted diseases, including of course infection by HIV.

One should also promote voluntary testing and counselling, in all health services, even when not directly linked to sexual and reproductive health, in maternities and in family planning and tuberculosis services.

When needed, action must be taken to combat and remedy gender-based violence and to protect and support victims of violence. This must include measured aiming at preventing acts of sexual violence in general and those committed as acts of war. This implies education and training campaigns for the armed forces as well as measures to end impunity of the perpetrators of such acts.

Lastly, one must encourage the promotion of good practices in all work places, including measures to prevent infections and to ensure blood safety, particularly in medical circles.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

All these commitments to better ensure the prevention of infection by HIV/AIDS form the core of the Belgian policies, in Belgium itself in order to control and reduce the number of people affected by the disease, as well as in Belgium's contribution to the global fight against HIV/AIDS.

I thank you for your attention.