

*Permanent Mission of Romania  
to the United Nations  
New York,*



*Mission permanente de la Roumanie  
auprès de l'Organisation des Nations Unies  
New York.*

Check against delivery

## **Statement**

**by**

**H.E. Ambassador Mihnea Motoc,  
Permanent Representative to the United Nations,  
Head of the Delegation of Romania  
to the High-level Plenary Meeting on HIV/AIDS**

**New York, June 2nd, 2006**

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I should like to make only a few nationally specific considerations, since H.E. The Federal Minister of Austria Ursula Haubner, speaking on behalf of the EU, spoke also for Romania. Besides, the gravity of the subject which dominated this week at the UN does not lend itself to long speeches.

Before anything else, I should like to accomplish a sad duty and pay tribute to the memory and lifelong accomplishments of somebody who could have still contribute immensely to the common struggle that gathered us here this week, the late Director General of WHO, Dr. Lee tong-wook.

We are all under the impression of the sensible and committed remarks of our President of the Assembly, of our Secretary General, of Dr. Piot and the many high level personalities attending the HIV/AIDS Plenary. Like perhaps many others, nothing appealed more to my conscience than the personal account and views that the young lady representing the civil society shared with us in this Hall, at the opening session.

We would not have done enough, and we cannot afford to rest, so long as such accounts are a thing of the present and, alas, of the future, and not of the past behind us.

True, we have accomplished a lot in terms of international partnership-type cooperation, considering that HIV/AIDS has indeed inflicted the single greatest reversal in human development, as we are soberly reminded by the 2005 Human Development Report.

It is reported that lately there has been a remission of the pandemic globally; however, this is accounted on evolutions in some 10 countries, while the overall proportion of people affected worldwide is still above one percent of the total population. New countries, new populations become affected, and AIDS grows especially severe for women and girls.

We are clearly not there yet. We have to concur with Dr. Piot when he says "It won't go away one fine day, and then we wake up and say, "Oh, AIDS is gone. We all have to admit the fact that there is an increasing diversity in how the epidemic looks". Two other distinguished individuals who think the same and act accordingly are the co-chairs for this process, my colleagues from Thailand and Barbados.

As far as Romania is concerned, we have strived hard to deal with our own HIV/AIDS challenge. By the end of 2005, the total, cumulative, HIV/AIDS number of registered cases in Romania is 7,623, of which 465 are children. We are working within the frame of a National Strategy for monitoring, controlling and preventing HIV/AIDS, covering the years 2004 to 2007, that has received valuable support from UNAIDS, WHO, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA. We are working under the assumption that HIV/AIDS is a health issue as much as it is a national security issue. The Strategy's main focus is comprehensive and evidence-based prevention and reduction of the HIV/AIDS social impact. It is closely connected to the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

It should be of relevance that Romania has now the largest, in the whole of Central and Eastern Europe, number of People Living with HIV/AIDS who are under treatment. 63,494 pregnant women tested in 2005 for HIV/AIDS. The number of people infected with HIV/AIDS who asked for medical treatment and care has globally increased. A more significant number of individuals, 6,400, are now having access to HAART. The HAART and opportunistic infections treatment is provided free of charge, and is covered out of a National Subprogram funding source. A larger number of long term survivors aged 13 to 15 has been registered. They are children born in 1987-1990, the main group where HIV/AIDS cases have been diagnosed.

These figures and the trends they suggest might be inspirational to others. While I was processing the data and assessments prepared for my Health Minister's attendance to the Plenary in New York, which has been prevented, much to his regret, by reasons beyond control, I have not seen once the word "success". And I believe rightly so, for we may pride ourselves with certain notable accomplishments the Romanian Government has been able to put together in its fight with the pandemic, but there is still work to do on better prevention and awareness-raising, while the prospect of new cases is not closed yet.

Over this weeklong gathering, powerful representatives have recast their strong support for the 2001 UN Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, support which will emerge at the end of the day as the Political Declaration of the High Level Meeting. Clearly, there is a lot that we can do together to kneel down the pandemic. The corporate world, for its part, can be a key component of the emergency plan for AIDS relief. Partnerships that have been reinforced over the past days mobilize resources and know-how to reach goals no one partner can achieve single handedly. We grow ever more sensitive to the rights connected to HIV/AIDS.

We learned to leave with the reality of the pandemic. Our ever present, ultimate goal, should however be not to accept that HIV/AIDS is going to fatally accompany humankind evolution, and act stubbornly, selflessly and more creatively to prevent and put it down. We cannot resign ourselves to not being able to cure our inner diseases, while at the same time going for the exploration and conquest of the Universe. We need to believe that we will eventually prevail over HIV/AIDS.

Thank you, President.