

***Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations Office***

***and other International Organizations in Geneva***

Your Excelency Ambassador Yury Ambrazevich, Permanent Representative of Belarus and Co-Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Social Forum,

Ambassador Mouayed Saleh, Vice President of the Human Rights Council,

Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,

Dr. Tedros Adhanom, Director-General of the World Health Organization,

Roberto Azevêdo, Director-General of the World Trade Organization,

Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS,

Ms. Loyce Maturu, Member of the Steering Committee of the Global Network of Young People Living with HIV,

Ladies and Gentlement,

It is a great honor to have been appointed as Co-Chairperson-Rapporteur of the 2017 Social Forum, dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of the HIV epidemic and other communicable diseases and epidemics .

The theme for this year’s Forum reaffirms the urgent need to address health issues through a human rights lens.

In the last decades we have witnessed a growing concern of the international community in the face of health emergencies, caused by well-known pathogens, or almost unknown pathogens, such as the Zika virus. The international community is improving the national, regional and international capacity to respond to unforeseen public health emergencies that pose a threat to the survival and wellbeing of people.

The challenges are global, and they request joint efforts. In this sense, we support WHO in its endeavours to develop an emergency programme for a coordinated global response to address such situations.

Moreover, strengthening health systems and promoting universal health coverage are essential measures to provide long-term sustainable responses to ensure that the world is better prepared to handle the next epidemic.

To be effective, these responses must include not only technical and financial support, but also be firmly anchored in a human rights perspective.

The fulfilment of the right to health encompasses not only equal access to adequate health care, but also the social, economic and environmental underlying determinants of health.

When dealing with communicable diseases, for example, poverty is a major factor. Lack of sanitation, air pollution, unsafe water and inappropriate waste disposal and management perpetuate the transmission of vector-borne and infectious diseases, which enables the outbreak of epidemics. Due to inadequate preparedness for health emergencies, these tragic events cause great loss, particularly affecting persons in vulnerable situations.

Moreover, discrimination through harmful social practices or restrictive legal norms is also a preeminent obstacle to the realization of the right to health. The stigma faced by persons living with HIV, as well as against members of key populations, has been progressively recognized as a matter of public health.

These challenges call for immediate action and a multisectorial approach.

The interdependence and the interlinkages between the human rights and the development frameworks were reaffirmed by the 2030 Agenda.

We must fulfil Goal 3. However, it is not possible to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, the objectives of that goal, without also addressing Goals 1 (no poverty), Goal 2 (zero hunger), Goal 5 (gender equality) and Goal 10 (reduced inequalities), just to mention a few examples.

Last June, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution put forward by Brazil, together with a group of countries, about the importance of the 2030 Agenda for the realization of the right to health. We look forward to the Office’s report on the matter, to be issued next year.

As you may have noticed, the 2017 Social Forum Programme was deeply inspired by the 2030 Agenda, in a joint effort to build bridges between SDGs and human rights obligations and norms.

In the following days, we will have the opportunity to address, among other issues, discrimination, the role of health care workers, international cooperation, access to medicines and, above all, the importance of civil society participation in tackling the HIV epidemic and other communicable diseases and epidemics.

The close collaboration between governments and civil society, together with other relevant stakeholders, has proven to be fundamental to the success of policies in this area, and Brazil is a good example.

The fight against HIV/AIDS in Brazil has been historically connected to the effective realization of the right to health and the promotion and protection of human rights. Our national program on HIV/AIDS combines prevention, care, treatment, epidemiological surveillance, clinical monitoring, and education.

Our multisectoral response to the Zika virus epidemic required a prompt reaction of the government at the national, regional and international levels, including international cooperation with WHO and bilateral institutions to accelerate R&D for a new vaccine and scaling up new vector control tools.

The end of the emergency doesn't mean the end of domestic action. Above all, the government continues to provide support to affected people and families not only in the health sector, but also through social protection measures.

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

The Social Forum is an opportunity to bring the health and human rights communities together. The participation, in the opening of this Forum, of the High Comissioner of Human Rights, the WHO Director General, the WTO Director General and UNAIDS Executive Director, together with governments and civil society organizations, shows that it is possible to join forces and leverage our efforts to ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all.

We hope you all benefit from this inspiring experience in the following days.

Now, I have the pleasure to give the floor to my colleague from Belarus, Ambassador Yuri Ambrazevich.