Public health and development: AIDS policy of the Community and the Members States in the developing world

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The rapporteur stressed above all the link between AIDS and poverty. He quoted a Ugandan civil servant, who stated that: ‘Someone who has a hole in his trousers probably has a hole in his condom’. He also emphasised that this scourge was a danger that hung over the health systems of developing countries. Given that the financial resources were limited, he called for them to be used as efficiently as possible. However, the fight against AIDS was not only a question of money; information campaigns could be designed, but what impact would they have if the majority of the people affected did not even have a radio? Commissioner PINHEIRO was pleased that Parliament and the Commission had similar views on the need to combat AIDS. It was essential to integrate the preventive measures into the health and family planning programmes. He stressed that it was very important not to marginalise people with HIV. In response to Parliament’s request for an action plan to combat AIDS, Mr PINHEIRO stated that this communication was a first step, a framework for reference that should form the basis of regional and national strategies to combat AIDS. The Commissioner considered that the Community’s financial contribution was not insignificant: to date, ECU 160 million had been released. The Council had also emphasised the need to increase substantially the financial contribution in this area. The priorities for the future should be set in accordance with the specific nature of the various regions and countries concerned.