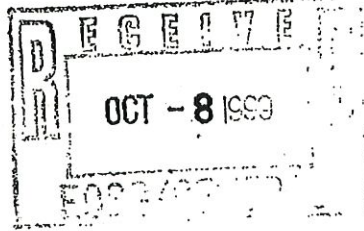


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**NOTE TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

The Security Council debate on Africa demonstrated yet again that political leaders on the continent feel that the UN has not paid sufficient attention to its problems. The regional hearings in Addis on the Millennium Assembly expressed a similar sentiment. There is great urgency in our continuing to push for African initiatives.

One area in which I feel we could do much more than we have been doing concerns HIV/AIDS. This pandemic is already ravaging a large number of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and all indications are that it will get worse over the course of the next decade. I realize that many African leaders are themselves reluctant to deal with the problem openly, but that is all the more reason for the UN to step in.

In this connection, I met earlier this week with Stephen Lewis, at his request. Stephen would be very interested in the possibility of being appointed as a Special Representative (or some similar such office) for HIV/AIDS. While such an appointment would have a universal scope, in the near term it could concentrate on the problem in Sub-Saharan Africa, where it is most severe.

Stephen would bring extraordinary qualities to such an appointment: long experience in African matters; a great interest in and concern with the issue of HIV/AIDS and its consequences; and a superior ability to articulate a vision and to mobilize resources behind it.

Stephen is also convinced that one can make a difference in the battle against HIV/AIDS, that there are resources out there and partnerships to be forged that can arrest and ultimately reduce this very costly disease -- costly in human terms as well as financial.

As you know, Stephen will be leaving UNICEF by the end of the month. International Aids Day is 1 December; if you were interested in making an AIDS initiative, that would be a good target date.

Thank you.

John G. Ruggie  
1 October, 1999

The DSG has been elaborating a major programme for HIV/AIDS with Peter Piot of UNAIDS and I have my full support to the endeavor. Would Lewis work with them or separately? Do seek the views of...  
19 Oct  
A. S. Gupta

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