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Opening remarks by H.E. Peter Thomson High-Level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance

Mr. Secretary-General,
Director General of WHO, Director General of FAO and Director General of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE),
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Esteemed Panelists, Ladies and Gentlemen,

For decades, antimicrobial medicines have saved millions of lives, by treating people with infectious diseases.

In recent years, however, the microbes or “superbugs” have adapted, undermining the effectiveness of antimicrobial medicines.

When medicines used to treat many types of infections are no longer effective, it is a warning of great challenges that go beyond our health systems, affecting aspects of our way of life.

We are already witnessing increasing health challenges that transcend national borders.

Meanwhile, health experts are warning us that Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) has the capacity to kill millions each year, and cost trillions to address.

They are warning that women, children, and vulnerable people – who are often more exposed to infections and viruses – are particularly at risk.

And they are warning that AMR will impact our environment, the health of our wildlife, our access to sustainable and safe food, and especially, our means of agriculture production.

A global response is required.

Ensuring healthy lives and well-being for all is not only a goal in itself, and I refer you to the targets of SDG 3, but is also a prerequisite to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a whole.

I have made the principle objective of the Presidency of the 71st Session of the General Assembly to be an overseeing of a universal push for meaningful progress in the implementation of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Therefore, we must ensure that AMR does not threaten our ability to achieve this high objective.

Today's High-level Meeting is set to approve a Political Declaration that reaffirms the World Health Organisation's "Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance" and recognizes that the key to tackling AMR lies with prevention and control of infections in humans and animals.

It also calls for:

- innovative research and development;
- affordable and accessible antimicrobial medicines and vaccines;
- improved surveillance and monitoring of AMR; and
- increased international cooperation to control and prevent AMR.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Representative of Mexico, Ambassador Camachohas, for leading the process to reach this Political Declaration.

Excellencies, no one country, sector or organization can address this global health challenge on its own, and innovative public-private partnerships, funding initiatives and inclusive approaches will be essential.

For sustainable development to be achieved for all, it is critical that we safeguard our ability to protect our health, feed ourselves and our families, conserve our environment, and develop our economies.

Ultimately, the future of humanity will depend on our ability to respond to the challenge of antimicrobial resistance.

Thank you.