**PANEL 1 – AIDS and the SDGs**

**Co-Chairs’ Summary**

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**It is my great pleasure to present the Co-Chairs’ summary of Panel 1 “*AIDS within the Sustainable Development Goals: leveraging the end of AIDS for social transformation and sustainable development*”, that was held on 8 June 2016 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

**I had the great honour to co-chair this panel with H.E. Mr Kwesi Amissah-Arthur, the Vice-President of Ghana.**

**The key messages emerging from this thematic panel were as follows:**

**This High-level meeting demonstrates that the international community is committed to and serious about implementing the SDGs, especially ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030. The Political Declaration we adopted commits us to a roadmap and ambitious targets for 2020, highlighting that ending AIDS will both contribute to and benefit from progress across the 2030 Agenda. The UNAIDS 2016-21 Strategy was cited as an instrument to support countries to achieve the targets. It is now up to us to demonstrate the political will required to achieve these, underpinned by a commitment to action on human rights, equality, dignity and justice.**

**Fulfilling the SDG commitment to leave no one behind demands removing barriers to the full realization of the rights of people living with, affected by and at risk of HIV, including entrenched structures of economic, social and legal exclusion as well as marginalization that includes criminal laws, harmful gender norms and discriminatory practices. There was discussion on how political considerations at times prevent moving forward with evidence-based responses to HIV, such as access to comprehensive sexuality education and the decriminalization of sex work.**

**The panel discussed how the AIDS response has paved the way for legal reforms and creating enabling environments. During the discussion, the Russian Federation, one of the thirty-five countries that still have HIV-related restrictions on entry, stay and residence of foreign citizens living with HIV, informed the panel about the lifting of some of these restrictions and its commitment to continue efforts to lift the remaining restrictions in the nearest future.**

**The AIDS response has taught us that multi-sector and multi-stakeholder action works. It has demonstrated how health and development gains can only be achieved by working with a range of partners from public, private and civil society spheres to tackle social, economic and gender inequalities using rights-based approaches.**

**Strong inter-sectoral collaboration can help address barriers that block access to services and enhance social protection. The private sector has an important role to play in delivering goods and services aside from supporting the AIDS response with innovation, technology and financing modalities.**

**Fast-Track Targets focus on reaching specific populations and locations where HIV investment will have the greatest impact. In practice, this requires overcoming barriers that some populations, in particular key populations, are facing to access social services and protect themselves from HIV.**

**While the AIDS response is about people, we clearly need strong data and comprehensive strategic information. This data must be disaggregated and democratized to help communities to effectively play their role as agents of change. The meaningful participation of affected communities in all aspects of the AIDS response, including monitoring and accountability, is critical to ensuring that it is relevant, evidence-informed, cost-effective and rights-based.**

**The *2016 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: On the Fast-Track to Accelerate the Fight against HIV and to End the AIDS Epidemic by 2030* sets out a roadmap of commitments to achieve the SDG target to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030. Civil society has a critical role to play in reaching the SDG targets and the commitments of the 2016 Political Declaration, through community service delivery and citizen-led accountability. This role can be only be fulfilled with adequate funding and the fusion of community responses in national AIDS plans as well as full community engagement in the political processes.**

**The Panel concluded by recognizing the urgency and tremendous opportunity to *Fast-Track* the response in order to reach the ambitious vision set out in the 2030 Agenda of an inclusive world with social justice for all.**