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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE ON THE REPORT OF THE HIGH-LEVEL PANEL  
ON ACCESS TO MEDICINES,  
“PROMOTING INNOVATION AND ACCESS TO HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES”  
November 2016**

Despite great scientific progress, all countries, from the poorest to the most prosperous, are facing challenges related to the costs of many medicines, diagnostics, medical devices and vaccines. Since rising costs of health technologies can push people into poverty, we have a shared duty to find solutions to ensure access to these technologies for all.

Soon after Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, I convened an independent High-Level Panel on Access to Medicines to “recommend solutions for remedying the policy incoherence between the justifiable rights of inventors, international human rights law, trade rules and public health in the context of health technologies”.

After an extensive and inclusive enquiry, the Panel released its report in September 2016 with a simple yet powerful message: no one should suffer because they cannot afford medicines, diagnostics, medical devices or vaccines. The report makes recommendations to governments, international organizations, industry, civil society and other stakeholders. The report addresses the relationship between intellectual property, access to health technologies, incentives for research and development and the opportunities to strengthen governance, accountability and transparency. It also serves as an important reminder of our duty to not only respect but to protect and fulfill the highest attainable right to health.

I thank the High-Level Panel for producing this important and timely report. I also wish to convey my appreciation to the Co-chairs, H.E. Ms. Ruth Dreifuss, former President of the Swiss Confederation, and H.E. Mr. Festus Gontebanye Mogae, former President of the Republic of Botswana, for their stewardship. I would also like to acknowledge the important contributions of the Expert Advisory Group, chaired by the Honourable Justice Mr. Michael Kirby of Australia. Finally, I extend my appreciation to the Secretariat of the High-Level Panel, led by the United Nations Development Programme working in close collaboration with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. I learned with sadness of the recent and untimely passing of a member of the High-Level Panel Secretariat, Ms. Katie Kirk. I extend my condolences to her family and colleagues.

I welcome the findings of this consensus report, including the individual commentaries by members, as a milestone in our ongoing dialogue and our quest for sustainable solutions. I encourage all stakeholders to review the report and its recommendations, taking into account existing international agreements and publications on this essential matter. In this regard, I further encourage all stakeholders to chart a way forward in appropriate fora to ensure access to medicines and health technologies for all who need them, wherever they are. This will represent a tremendous step towards meeting the right to the highest attainable standard of health as well as Sustainable Development Goal 3 to ensure healthy lives and promote the well-being of all people of all ages, everywhere.