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Joint Declaration on Global Health by His Holiness Pope Francis, Head of the Catholic Church, and His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi

On the occasion of the Reaching the Last Mile Forum in Abu Dhabi, we reaffirm our mutual cooperation towards the improvement of the health and wellbeing of communities in need.

This cooperation stems from a belief that every person, no matter their background, has the right to live a dignified and healthy life.

The context in which these pathologies often arise is the poverty and social vulnerability of the most marginalized members of society. We therefore call for renewed efforts – including comprehensive political action and willing cooperation between civil society and individual States, which have a responsibility for the health of their own citizens – to promote sanitary, social and educational programmes and to develop adequate medical networks of prevention, diagnosis and treatment, so that no one remains left behind.

We also make an appeal to the international community to collaborate to reach the most vulnerable populations and focus attention on diseases that afflict the most impoverished people.

One such area of focus is the fight to end Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), which affect more than 1.5 billion of the world's population. Despite programmes launched at the international level and improved access to treatments, NTDs remain a second priority on the global agenda.

Faced with diseases that today can be monitored, prevented and eliminated, there is a need for greater efforts on the parts of all to coordinate available resources in order to achieve adequate solutions. This will also demand an interdisciplinary, socio-medical and environmental approach.

Guaranteeing the right to treatment for all people is paramount. We therefore fully support the Reaching the Last Mile Fund and its work in treating and monitoring of NTDs, and in the future will continue to collaborate on other global health initiatives.

Finally, we trust in the solidarity of all people who understand the sufferings of those in situations of great need

in neglected and disadvantaged parts of the world, so that this needless scourge afflicting humanity may be eradicated once and for all.

Abu Dhabi, 18th November 2019

On behalf of His Holiness Pope Francis
His Grace Archbishop Francisco Montecillo Padilla, Apostolic Nuncio to the UAE

On behalf of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed
His Excellency Mohamed Mubarak Al Mazrouei
Undersecretary of the Crown Prince Court of Abu Dhabi

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