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**WELCOMING REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE KATHLEEN SEBELIUS
SECRETARY OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

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Honorable President
Honorable Ministers of Health
Distinguished Delegates
Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Dr. Mirta Roses, Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I. Introduction/Research

Good morning, and welcome.

Before I begin, I want to express the gratitude that I know all of us share for the service of Mirta Roses

Throughout her time at PAHO, she has shown an unwavering commitment to the health and well-being of people across the Americas. And as the first woman to lead the world's oldest international health agency, she has set a shining example.

Thank you, Mirta, for your leadership.

For more than a century, PAHO has been a driving force behind many of the greatest successes in public health throughout the region of the Americas. And this organization has also given our nations the opportunity to come together in the face of some of our greatest challenges.

Together, we have worked to reverse the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. We have shared resources to improve nutrition, sanitation, and access to clean water across the region. We have prepared our populations for disaster. And when disaster struck, we responded together and provided relief.

Last week President Obama addressed the U.N. General Assembly and urged the global community to come together to prevent, detect, and fight every kind of biological danger. And I was pleased to join Margaret Chan in New York to sign an agreement affirming our shared commitment to strengthen cooperation on health security priorities.

PAHO countries have also invested in a shared future. You can see this in coalitions like the United States-Latin America Cancer Research Network, which is bringing institutions and investigators together to advance their research.

This spring, the network helped launch a breast cancer research project across 35 hospitals, clinics and research facilities in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Uruguay. It is not only helping us better understand how to prevent and treat breast cancer. It is also building a foundation for high-quality clinical trials and research across the region.

Networks like this are made possible in part by the platform PAHO provides for collaboration across the Americas. Today, that collaboration is more necessary than ever.

II. Chronic Diseases

Many of us have recently returned from the first-ever UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Non-communicable Diseases in New York, where we brought a new level of international attention to the chronic diseases that kill 36 million people around the world every year.

Last week's meeting was a unique opportunity to unite the global community around this critical fight, and it would not have happened without the leadership of people in this room, particularly our CARICOM [CARE-ih-com] colleagues and our good friend Sir George Alleyne

For years, our region has helped shape the international conversation about non-communicable diseases, from the 2007 Declaration of Port-of-Spain to the resolution from Trinidad and Tobago that ultimately led to last week's summit – and now the rest of the world is joining that conversation

That's critical because we still have a long way to go if we want to turn the tide on chronic disease.

Around the globe, nations continue to take steps to give their citizens the tools and information they need to make healthy choices. For example, we are launching a global public-private partnership to support tobacco cessation efforts using mobile phone technologies that are now widely available in middle and low income countries. And we also recently announced a major new initiative to help promote smoke-free workplaces around the world.

Many ministries of health have committed to be a part of these campaigns. I particularly want to thank Uruguay for joining us in these efforts and I encourage others to join us as well.

Unless we do a better job preventing and treating chronic diseases, the cost will continue to rise for all of us. The US is committed to learning from our partners across the region and around the globe. The more we work together, the faster we will be able to test new strategies, learn what works, and implement them in our own communities.

III. Drug Resistance

The theme of World Health Day this year is another urgent global health challenge that demands a coordinated international response.

Antimicrobial resistance is not a new phenomenon, but everyday it grows more dangerous. In communities across the region, outbreaks of drug-resistant pathogens have taken too many lives and brought significant economic costs.

The United States shares the key priorities outlined in PAHO's paper on anti-microbial resistance, especially the importance of strengthening surveillance, using medicines rationally—including antibiotics, improving infection prevention and control, and promoting research.

Drug-resistant pathogens do not respect national boundaries, which means that anti-microbial resistance is a threat to everyone, of every age, gender, and socioeconomic background, in countries of every size and stage of development. And so we must confront it together.

Already, many international surveillance and prevention programs are under way around the globe, with many focused on the Americas. US scientists from the FDA, CDC and USDA continue to provide expert advice, share information, and collaborate on research. And we are committed to continuing with our international partners in this fight.

At the core of all our partnerships in the region is a belief that strong, prosperous societies are also healthy societies, and that there is no goal more important to our future than improving health.

I look forward to continuing to work with all our partners in the Americas to do just that.