**2017 Human Rights Council Social Forum**

**Closure of the Social Forum**

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Yury Ambrazevich, Permanent Representative of Belarus, Co-Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Social Forum**

Thank you so much, dear colleague. Distinguish participants of the Social Forum, I would now like to address you upon the closure of our event here today, which was devoted to issues of upholding human rights in the context of the HIV epidemic and other communicable diseases and epidemics. The Forum’s program and the statements of all the rapporteurs and all those who shared their vision and their experience of the situation in the field of the fight against the epidemic and other communicable diseases with us, and those who shared with us their personal experience, certainly made our discussion multifaceted and fruitful. I’d like to thank the UN OHCHR and UNAIDS for the professional work in preparing the meeting and ensuring that it was successfully conducted.

Our discussions have confirmed that governments are striving to adopt effective measures to fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic and other communicable diseases. To this end, national programs are elaborated and implemented, the international cooperation exists, and the assistance form specialized agencies is requested. Besides, there is a regular, ongoing work within the framework of social partnership with civil society, with the private sector, with the beneficiaries of these systems. We again were able to confirm the key importance of accessible and effective medicines and treatment to achieve very bold ambitions by 2030, which is to put an end to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, TB, hepatitis and other infectious diseases.

The first-hand experience of those who have experienced the fight against these diseases and have dealt with the stigma and discrimination addressed against them clearly shows that the human rights approaches are very important within the framework of national and international policies in the field of health. Every individual has an inalienable right to the protection of his health and to a decent life. We must strive to ensure that everyone is covered by health services, and these health services must be inclusive and accessible. Our discussions have shown that there are many different approaches to organizing things at a national level, when it comes to ensuring that there is a healthy lifestyle and well-being for all of the State’s citizens. A number of States already possess health systems or the accessible provision of health services, but even these systems need to be strengthened and backed, including to step up the mechanism of social partnerships.

Other societies have more traditional systems to support work with the population in the field of providing health services, they require the development of a sustainable state infrastructure in the field of the provision of health services. Referring to the health services infrastructure, it would be remiss of me not to recall the important testimony of those who shared their experience in the fight against the epidemic in conflict and post-conflict societies as well as the bravery of medical workers. There is no alternative to peace, security and stability when it comes to upholding all human rights, including the right to health.

Distinguish participants of the Forum, I don’t claim to be able to come up with the comprehensive conclusion to the three days of discussions. Alongside my colleague from Brazil and representatives of the UNAIDS and OHCHR, I’m going to attempt to summarize all the things that we had in our report, which will be submitted to the consideration of the March session of the HRC in 2018.

We have been able to see that all partners are striving to succeed in the task that we have set for ourselves in the Agenda 2030. An important component of this support will be effective partnership at the national and international levels. I would like to thank again the Ambassador of Brazil, Ms. Azevêdo, as well as her team, for our cooperation, and also to individually thank the conference officers and our interpreters.

Distinguish participants of this Forum, thank you so much to all of you form us, the diplomates, the organizers of the Forum. And I would like to inform you that we already have a topic for the Forum in 2018, which will be devoted to sports, the Olympic movement, the Olympic spirit and the protection and promotion of human rights in the context of sports events. Allow me on behalf of the panel and on behalf of the Co-Chair, Ms. Azevêdo, the Permanent Representative of Brazil, to close the 2018 Social Forum.

Thank you to all of you for your participation.