



## PRESS RELEASE

### Launch of the Working Paper “Universal Access to Medicines – Ethical Reflections on Ending Pediatric HIV”

6 December 2018

*Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Vatican City*

On 6 December 2018, the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva and the *Caritas in Veritate* Foundation organized the launching of the publication on “**Universal Access to Medicines – Ethical Reflections on Ending Pediatric HIV**” in conjunction with the “High-Level Dialogue to Scale Up Diagnosis and Treatment of Pediatric HIV” convened by His Eminence, Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

In addition to the 80 participants to the High-Level Dialogue, coming from the Holy See, UNAIDS, the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the World Health Organization (WHO), Caritas Internationalis, the World Council of Churches–Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (WCC-EAA), the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF), governments, private industry engaged in developing and producing pharmaceuticals and diagnostic tools, as well as faith-based organizations, a large number of Ambassadors accredited to the Holy See also attended the launching from Australia, Chile, Taiwan, Ukraine, Portugal, Burkina Faso, Lithuania, Montenegro, Italy, Bolivia, Czech Republic, Timor-Leste, Peru, Ireland, Indonesia, Senegal, Panama, Indonesia, Ecuador, Germany, Paraguay, Haiti, Cote d'Ivoire Benin, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, among others.

**His Eminence Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson**, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, briefly introduced the launching, welcomed all ambassadors and stressed the importance of such a gathering of experts in this field.

**His Excellency Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič**, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva explained the main reasons for proposing such a publication, namely to integrate the human dimension, the centrality of human dignity and the common good within the discussions concerning access to early diagnosis and treatment for children living with HIV. He further explained that the publication proposed a two-faceted approach, with a first part including chapters on this theme written by experts in the field (most of them being present at the High-Level Dialogue) and the second part containing a compilation of recent documents of the Church’s engagement on Universal Access to Medicines.

**Her Excellency Ambassador Deborah L. Birx**, M.D., U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy, who contributed to the publication with one article on “the PEPFAR/UNAIDS Faith Initiative: Advancing the Diagnosis and Treatment of Children Living with HIV Through Partnerships in Faith” explained the high significance of the work done by faith-based organizations which had been included as case studies in the publication, since they represented real life experiences. She highlighted that the publication was a good tool to keep track of what had already been done and what still needed to improve.

**Mr. Tim Martineau**, Acting Deputy Executive Director, Programme Branch and the Director of the Fast-Track Implementation Department at UNAIDS, outlined the importance of including ethics in the discussions of access of children to treatment and thanked all for participating in this publication, which clearly showed the willingness to look for progress and solutions.

**Mr. Gottfried Hirschall**, Director of the HIV/AIDS Department and the Global Hepatitis Programme of the World Health Organization, co-chair of the AIDS FREE Working Group, who contributed to the publication, recalled the importance of moving from dialogue to engagement and commitment, and lastly to taking a responsibility for the children, who are the most vulnerable part of our societies.

**Mr. Charles Lyons**, President and CEO of the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, co-chair of the AIDS FREE Working Group, and author of the article “Origins and Outcome of the Action Plan for Scaling Up Early Diagnosis and Treatment of Children and Adolescents” of this publication, stressed the main steps that have led to the “Rome Action Plan” of November 2017. He reminded the participants to the launching that this publication represents an excellent tool to show us what we need to focus on in the future, especially in terms of commitments. He also recalled that the first warnings from the field calling for help in healing AIDS came from people of faith and from faith-based organizations.