February 1, 2017

His Excellency Mr. António Guterres
United Nations Secretary-General
United Nations Headquarters
405 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017, USA

Her Excellency Dr. Margaret Chan
World Health Organization Director-General
World Health Organization Headquarters
Avenue Appia 20
1211 Genève 27, Switzerland

Dear H.E. Secretary-General António Guterres and H.E. Director-General Margaret Chan,

On behalf of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), I would like to reiterate our strong support for the political declaration arising from the United Nations (UN) General Assembly high level meeting on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) this past September 2016. The global AMR crisis threatens patient safety, public health and global security. Well-coordinated and strongly resourced strategies are necessary to effectively combat AMR. Last September’s meeting was a critical step, but the impact of the political declaration will only be as strong as our collective action to achieve its goals. IDSA urges you to move swiftly to implement the strategies outlined in the political declaration, including the establishment of the interagency coordination group that draws upon the expertise of relevant stakeholders.

In June 2016, IDSA was honored to present to UN member nations learning about AMR and potential solutions. The Society was also delighted to participate in the high level meeting in September. IDSA members are on the frontlines of the battle against antimicrobial resistance. Daily efforts include caring for patients with or at risk of serious infections, leading antimicrobial stewardship and infection prevention/control programs, conducting research, implementing public health interventions and providing expert guidance to policymakers. IDSA has been sounding the alarm on AMR since 2004, issuing numerous reports on rising resistance rates and the dwindling antimicrobial pipeline. IDSA has worked to advance policy solutions both domestically and globally. Many of our recommendations regarding antimicrobial stewardship; infection prevention; surveillance and data collection; and antimicrobial drug, diagnostic, and vaccine research and development were reflected in the political declaration as well as the US national action plan.
While IDSA is extremely pleased at the heightened attention being paid to antimicrobial resistance around the globe, we must continue working to ensure that this important work advances. We look forward to reports from member nations on the status of individual countries’ national action plans at the World Health Assembly in May 2017. While actions by individual nations are necessary, they alone are insufficient to effectively combat AMR. Given the very global nature of infectious diseases and the ways in which resistant pathogens easily spread, well-coordinated global activity is essential. We strongly encourage you to move quickly to establish the interagency coordination group that is outlined in the political declaration to help ensure multinational coordination and accountability.

IDSA also feels strongly that governments alone cannot solve the AMR crisis. Robust participation by civil societies is imperative. In particular, we believe that experts within infectious diseases medical community can bring vital on-the-ground perspectives and in depth knowledge of the scientific and practical problems as well as potential solutions regarding AMR. IDSA hopes you will consider allowing one of our expert leaders to serve on the AMR coordinating group. We stand ready to assist with all of your AMR efforts.

Once again, IDSA thanks you for your leadership and commitment to addressing the global AMR crisis. The Society looks forward to continuing these good works with you.

Sincerely,

William G. Powderly, MD, FIDSA
President, IDSA