**First Lady Tobeka Zuma holds bilateral talks with Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS**

JOHANNESBURG, 29 MARCH—First Lady Tobeka Zuma, in her capacity as the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Special Advocate for the Health of Women, Youth and Children, and Founder and Patron of the Tobeka Madiba Zuma (TMZ) Foundation, today held bilateral talks with Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS. The purpose of the discussion was to reflect on South Africa’s achievements and milestones in the AIDS response.

Madam Zuma, in her role as UNAIDS Special Advocate, continues to drive the TMZ Foundation’s HIV programmes, which aim to support South Africa to achieve the relevant Sustainable Development Goals to end the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030. HIV prevalence among adults (15-49 years) in South Africa is one of the highest in the world, estimated at 18.9%.

Discussions during the meeting today focused on community engagement as an essential tool in the South African AIDS response. Cuba, through a strong community engagement model, has been able to reduce HIV prevalence to 1%. South Africa is looking to adopt a similar model as it aims to reach those being left behind by the AIDS response, including key populations and adolescent girls and young women.

“As First Lady of South Africa I am happy with the milestones that we have reached as a country in the AIDS response. The epidemic is no longer controlling the country; rather the country is controlling the epidemic. Today we see millions of people living with HIV who are living normal lives, due to the action taken by government and its partners. The warm and close relationship that we have with UNAIDS has helped us as a country in overcoming the barriers caused by HIV,” said Madam Zuma.

One of the most critical barriers identified and discussed during the meeting was that of reaching adolescents with HIV prevention and treatment services, and influencing behavior change in order to ensure that young people are healthy and empowered.

**The Tobeka Madiba Zuma Foundation**

The Tobeka Madiba Zuma Foundation, which was conceptualized in 2009 and started operating in 2010, provides a novel approach to humanitarian outreach as envisioned by the First Lady of South Africa, Madam Tobeka Madiba Zuma. Madam Zuma is passionate about the plight of the impoverished and it is her vision to lend a helping hand to those in need, in order to support the government in meeting its objectives towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

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