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CANADIAN-FUNDED DRUG FACILITY PROVES MAJOR SUCCESS IN GLOBAL FIGHT AGAINST TUBERCULOSIS

Life-saving drugs are treating and curing millions of TB patients in the world's poorest countries for \$12-14

Ottawa, Canada - The Global Drug Facility (GDF) - an innovative scheme launched with Canadian funding in 2001 to provide high quality TB drugs for low income countries - completed its fourth year of operations today with the release of a new report that GDF has now provided drugs for 4.4 million TB patients in 58 countries around the world, nearly all with average per capita incomes of under \$1,000.

The report was presented at a press conference in Ottawa by Dr. Marcos Espinal, Executive Secretary of the Stop TB Partnership that operates GDF from its small suite of offices in Geneva, Switzerland. Joining him in the event were Hon. Aileen Carroll, the Canadian Minister for International Cooperation, and Melissa Phipers, president of Stop TB Canada.

"The Global Drug Facility is a major success for public health that has served as a model for subsequent initiatives launched by the World Health Organization to provide drugs for malaria and HIV/AIDS," Dr. Espinal said. "The GDF is also very much a success story for the government of Canada, whose visionary aid provided its start-up funding and constitutes the largest share of GDF's total budget of \$55 million to date."

As a prerequisite for GDF support, all countries must implement DOTS*, the internationally recommended strategy against TB which the World Bank has called "one of the most cost-effective of all health interventions." Based on average DOTS cure rates for TB patients, 3.8 million lives will be saved by the drugs GDF has provided - more than 20 times the number of people killed by the tsunami that struck southeast Asia last December.

GDF's impact can be seen in the rapid scale-up of DOTS programs globally since 2001, which during that time have increased the number of TB patients they treat by two thirds to more than 3 million each year.

"As a founding donor to the Global Drug Facility, Canada is proud of its success and life-saving work in the fight against tuberculosis," Minister Carroll said. "In its four years of operation, the facility has become one of the most cost-effective and efficient channels to control TB, ensuring that high-quality drugs are made available to those most in need at the lowest



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possible price. In real numbers, this means that close to four million TB sufferers will be cured of this disease, thereby allowing them to lead healthy and productive lives. Through strengthened support for the GDF and working in collaboration with the Stop TB Partnership, Canada is committed to reducing the global burden of TB and achieving the Millennium Development Goals."

The Stop TB Partnership, housed by WHO in its Geneva headquarters, is a broad-based social movement comprising 325 members that include the World Bank, CIDA, USAID, DFID and other donor institutions; leading technical agencies like WHO, CDC and the International Union Against TB and Lung Disease; foundations; NGOs; universities; advocacy organizations like Results-Resultats Canada and Stop TB Canada; and patient activist groups.

World TB Day occurs every 24th of March and is coordinated by the Stop TB Partnership to raise awareness about TB internationally.

*DOTS is the internationally recommended strategy for controlling TB and consists of five elements:

- Government commitment to TB control
- Diagnosis through bacteriology and an effective laboratory network
- Standardised short-course chemotherapy with full patient support throughout treatment
- *Uninterrupted supply of quality-assured drugs*
- Recording and reporting to measure patient and program outcomes

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