

World TB Day 2015: “Reach the 3 Million: Reach, Treat, Cure Everyone”

Every year, on 24 March, the world marks World TB Day (WTBD), one of the world’s top health challenges with 9 million new TB cases and the deaths of nearly 1.5 million people each year. The Day is an occasion to mobilize political and social commitment for further progress towards eliminating TB as a public health burden.

For World TB Day 2015, we are calling on all partners to continue to call for a global effort to continue their commitment to find, treat and cure all people with TB and accelerate progress towards the bold goal of ending TB by 2035.

Scale of the problem

More than 2 billion people, equal to one-third of the world’s population are infected with TB – out of this, 1 in 10 will go on to develop TB during their lifetime. Out of the overall 13 million TB cases in 2013, 9 million were new cases but consistently 3 million people were either not diagnosed, not treated, or officially not registered by national TB programmes (NTPs). Many of those missed will either die, follow some unknown treatment but most will continue to infect others. Major efforts are needed to close this gap as despite our best efforts, the proportion of missed cases has been nearly the same for the past seven years.

Among those missed are those most vulnerable to falling ill with TB including very poor and/or malnourished or undernourished people, people living with HIV/AIDS, children and women, migrants, prisoners, refugees and internally displaced persons, miners, the elderly, ethnic minorities, indigenous populations, drug users and homeless persons.

Around 3.3 million people (equal to 1 in 3 falling ill with TB) are currently “missed” by health systems according to figures from 2013.

Globally in 2013, an estimated 480,000 people developed multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB), with extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) reported by 100 countries. There is slow progress in tackling drug-resistant TB – 3 in 4 drug-resistant TB cases remain without a diagnosis, and only 97,000 patients were started on MDR-TB treatment last year. Around 39,000 diagnosed patients (plus an unknown number detected in previous years) were on waiting lists, and the gap between people diagnosed and people treated widened between 2012 and 2013 in several countries. For TB patients known to be living with HIV, only 70% of TB patients known to be HIV-positive were on antiretroviral therapy (ART). This level however falls short of the 100% target set for 2015.

There has been some growth in funding for TB prevention, diagnosis and treatment since 2002, but there is still an annual gap of around US\$ 2 billion needed to ensure a full response to the global TB epidemic. And critically, although new tools are emerging from the pipeline, much more essential investment is needed to reach, treat and cure the missed millions.

Reach, Treat, Cure Everyone: main messaging

Although we have seen progress in TB, it has been at an unacceptably low rate of decline in incidence per year. Mark Dybul, Executive Director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has previously said that if we the world was able to cure AIDS in six months, the world would never accept a decline of 2% a year.

To address TB, there is a critical need to address weaknesses in countries' health systems, and we need sustained and predictable funding, political engagement and support. We need countries to step up their domestic investments in TB in a cost efficient manner – in prioritized interventions that work and show impact. We need communities, people affected and civil society in the driving seat.

This World TB Day 2015 will signal a renewed effort to alert Ministers of Health to the global, regional and national TB emergency, emphasizing the unacceptable situation that many cases of TB go undiagnosed, untreated or are not cured. It is a chance to engage with National TB Programme Managers and other stakeholders to improve the quality of existing programmes and the access to care and services.

This year's campaign also provides a platform to highlight the urgent need to fill the current funding gap of US\$ 2 billion per year for TB interventions and the immediate need to fill the US\$ 1.39 billion annual gap for research and development. The importance of eliminating access barriers to all recommended TB diagnostics and drugs and addressing TB and MDR-TB as global health security threats will also be highlighted, along with the fact that TB needs to be everyone's concern and the urgent need to therefore involve everyone in the fight against the disease.

Call to Action

World TB Day is an opportunity for affected persons and communities in which they live, governments, civil society organizations, health-care providers, the private sector and international partners to ensure access to diagnosis, treatment and cure for everyone. There is an urgent need to accelerate the reduction in the number of TB cases through the engagement of civil society, communities and the private sector.

For solutions to be effective and sustainable, actions from grassroots organizations, governments and the global community are needed.

Governments and Ministers of Health: ensure understanding, political commitment and public funding to change the way TB is fought in order to reach all of those who need it, and to share proven strategies and lessons learned through country-to-country cooperation initiatives.

National TB Programme Managers and wider healthcare providers: expand access to care, screening and testing in order to address the heavy burden of missed TB patients needed to reach, treat and cure the vulnerable and underserved communities; to make every effort to

identify patients with TB for further testing and eliminate access barriers to all recommended TB diagnostics and drugs.

International partners and donors: increase the level of understanding and awareness on TB and fill the current funding gap for TB interventions, research and development and support for the End TB Strategy and the Global Plan to Stop TB.

What we really mean

The post-2015 End TB Strategy aims to end the TB pandemic by 2035. A dramatic change needs to take place over the next few years in how we fight TB. Our current tools use technology that is old and outdated, with treatment regimens that are long, complicated and with huge side effects, and with a vaccine that is 90 years old and not very effective, with no point-of-care diagnosis. It is an opportunity to start thinking out of the box through several ways:

1. Active case finding which means radical, innovative ways of delivering services, new tools, new boundaries with active interventions for people affected by TB in the most vulnerable groups.
2. Investing in interventions tailored to the economic, geographical and social landscape.
3. Adjusting interventions to 2015 tools and thinking in new ways with a better reliance on creative information and communications technological (ICT) tools and platforms.
4. Broadening the spectrum of partners' engagement in the fight against TB by engaging with partners in tobacco, nutrition, diabetes and others as well as non-medical partners to include social development, urban planning, and the private sector.
5. Using innovative thinking in implementing current and future tools and delivering services.

Media materials

Social media: Members of the public can join the World TB Day awareness-raising campaign including through social media to amplify messages that the Stop TB Partnership will be issuing. Suggested tweets will be available for partners to disseminate using the hashtag #WTBD2015 and #ReachTreatCureEveryone

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

Communications outreach

Prior to World TB Day, the Stop TB Partnership will make the following materials available for your reference, local adaptation and media outreach.

- Statement from the Executive Director of the Stop TB Partnership
- World TB Day Manifesto
- Suggested template letter to Ministers of Health: the objective is to get Ministers up to speed on the global TB situation, emphasizing the unacceptable fact that many cases of TB go undetected, untreated or are not cured in their countries

- Suggested template letter to National TB Programme Managers with a request to improve the quality of access to care/services
- Posters, campaign logos, web banner
- Infographics
- Fact Sheet
- PowerPoint Slide deck