

To STOP TB we need to PREVENT TB

How to Reach the UNHLM Targets on TB Preventive Therapy

4 July 2019, Geneva Switzerland -

A landmark meeting of high TB burden countries and stakeholders on *How to Reach the UN High-Level Meeting (HLM) Targets on TB Preventive Therapy* took place in Geneva, Switzerland. The interactive gathering of about 70 participants was convened by the Stop TB Partnership and its Board's Private Sector Constituency, in collaboration with The Global Fund (GF) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Participants included the top TB burden countries, donors, technical partners, private sector, and affected community.

This is the first global meeting that exclusively focused on how to achieve the UNHLM Preventive TB Therapy target with a complete range of stakeholders.

The symposium served as a forum for countries and partners to express commitment, discuss the related scientific rationale and new developments, develop concrete plans to scale up, share experiences in addressing barriers, and clear resource needs.

Dr. Lucica Ditiu, Executive Director of Stop TB Partnership, stated, "We have solid UNHLM TB targets, and it is our collective responsibility to reach them by the end of 2022. For a far too long, we did not look comprehensively at interventions that should be implemented if we want to go towards ending TB and prevention was always left behind. It is great we can openly discuss what the opportunities and bottlenecks we face in scaling up TB prevention efforts are. It starts with changing our mindsets! It's time to do this."

Heads of agencies, countries, and partners expressed their commitments to the UNHLM targets and articulated their strategies and plans. Peter Sands, Executive Director of The Global Fund, said, "We will ensure that in the next funding cycle, there is a significant scale-up of TB preventive therapy." Exciting information was shared on new scientific developments in the area of better diagnostic tools and shorter treatment regimens.





Countries highlighted progress, challenges, monitoring plans, and additional resource needs. Sessions also focused on epidemiologic impact, engagement of communities, and projects that are targeting elimination.

Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist of WHO emphasized the importance of research and said, “We need more research to identify those latently infected individuals who have the highest risk of progression to TB. We need a point of care, diagnostic, and short, affordable, effective, and safe treatment regimens to make a dent in the

incidence of TB. Our priority number one should be to ensure drugs are available and affordable in as many countries as possible.”

In September 2018, the United Nations convened the first-ever UNHLM to accelerate the global response for ending the TB epidemic. [The UNHLM Political Declaration](#) set several targets and commitments, and among them was a target of at least 30 million people put on TB Preventive Therapy in the period 2018-2022. Considering that only about 1 million people received TB Preventive Therapy worldwide in 2017, a significant scale-up of efforts will be needed, especially in high-burden countries to reach this target of 30 million in 5 years.. Country-level indicative targets for TB Preventive Therapy are available [here](#).