



World TB Day: Together we fight TB and the Coronavirus

Today - on World TB Day - KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation (KNCV) sends a special message of support to everyone worldwide working in healthcare and infectious disease control: *'Today on World TB Day we applaud all our colleagues fighting COVID19!'*. All other activities planned for today have been canceled due to the Coronavirus.

The Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, the public health services and several other prominent buildings in the Netherlands would be lit red today, joining the Stop TB Partnership campaign #LightUpForTB. "At the moment, this would not be appropriate. All effort and capacity is needed in the fight against the Coronavirus," says Kitty van Weezenbeek, executive director of KNCV. "The fight against TB, the most deadly infectious disease in the world, will of course continue to be of the highest importance to us. Every day, 4,000 people worldwide die from this disease. We will continue to fight against TB, but right now KNCV is also ready to support the fight against the Coronavirus. Our staff stands ready to help, both in the Netherlands and at our offices in Africa and (Central) Asia."

Standing strong together against infectious diseases

For the epidemiologists, doctors and other employees of KNCV, the crisis caused by the Coronavirus is – unfortunately - familiar territory. Van Weezenbeek: "Many components of TB control are very relevant for tackling the Coronavirus. This includes selecting potential patients, infection prevention, contact investigation and monitoring the epidemic. In addition, the BCG vaccine against TB may also protect people against a serious form of the Coronavirus, as our colleagues from UMC Utrecht and Radboudumc Nijmegen are now investigating."

A vaccine that offers complete protection against TB doesn't exist yet either. As a result, 10 million people are affected by TB every year, of which 1.5 million die. But there is hope: in many countries - among which the Netherlands, where KNCV was established in 1903 – TB is under control. People with TB are diagnosed quickly and receive appropriate treatment.

Van Weezenbeek: “The Coronavirus is a completely different type of infectious disease with a different course. But obviously, together with the entire world, we hope that the Coronavirus will be stopped soon. Our thoughts are with the people and their families affected by this disease and we deeply admire all of our healthcare colleagues who are so committed. Together we will continue to fight for a world without TB and the Coronavirus.”

KNCV will share it's special message of support to all of her colleagues worldwide, by joining the #WeApplaud campaign of Stop TB Partnership. The message is also shown today on the LED screens of two major conventions centers in The Netherlands: Ahoy Rotterdam and World Forum The Hague.

**Today on
World TB Day
#WeApplaud all
our colleagues
fighting COVID19!**

