



23 March 2024

His Excellency : President Cyril Ramaphosa

Cc : MoH -Dr J. Paahla , NTP- Dr Ndjeka and TB Caucus

Heads of State and other world leaders came together in September 2023 to review on 2018 commitments and also re-commit in ending TB on the 2023 Declaration of United Nations High Level Meeting on TB.

Following the UN High-Level Meeting on TB in September 2023, we've witnessed unprecedented progress: a record 7.5 million diagnoses out of an estimated 10.3 million cases in 2022 - the highest number of people with TB ever diagnosed and treated in a year. Our focus is clear: escalate funding for implementation, accelerate research and development for new tools including vaccines, enhance access to rapid molecular diagnosis and efficient treatments, prioritize TB prevention, address TB in children, and support the vital work in Communities, Rights, and Gender (CRG).

On 24 March 2024, its yet again World TB Day and we need everyone – TB affected communities, political leaders, civil society, donors, researchers, the private sector, and most importantly, each of us - to take this message one step further by saying what each of us is doing to help End TB. 6 Key Asks that were submitted by TB Affected communities & Civil Society to UN World Leaders to make sure we get back on track on TB targets, and **the Heads of States responded on the UNHLM on TB by the targets & commitments below:**

- a) Reaching 90% of people with TB prevention and care services, using a WHO-recommended rapid test as the first method of diagnosing TB; licensing at least one new TB vaccine; closing funding gaps for TB implementation and research by 2027
- b) Commit to urgently strengthen measures to reduce tuberculosis-related deaths, including among people living with HIV, through comprehensive multisectoral

actions, including but not limited to the implementation of the World Health Organization End TB Strategy

- c) Commit to develop and implement ambitious costed national tuberculosis strategic plans or national health strategies with multisectoral approaches, including with the active involvement of communities and people affected by tuberculosis, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders to enable universal access to quality tuberculosis services and actions to address all tuberculosis determinants and drivers, such as poverty, undernutrition, HIV, inequalities by social and economic position
- d) Improve availability, affordability and efficiency of health products by increasing transparency of prices of medicines, vaccines, medical devices, diagnostics, assistive products, cell- and gene-based therapies and other health technologies across the value chain, including through improved regulations and building constructive engagement and a stronger partnership with relevant stakeholders, including industries, the private sector and civil society
- e) Commit to accelerate progress to end the crisis of the drug-resistant tuberculosis epidemic in the context of broader national, regional and global mechanisms to address antimicrobial resistance, by improving treatment adherence for people with drug-susceptible and drug-resistant tuberculosis, including with support of digital technologies, and by working towards the achievement of the universal, equitable and affordable access
- f) Commit to invest in tuberculosis services and health workforce, support service providers, ensuring sufficient quantity, adequate levels of training and motivation, surveillance, inter alia, integrated molecular surveillance, information systems, laboratory capacity, community-based care, as well as to consolidate and adopt existing laboratory capacities used during the COVID-19 pandemic to increase the access to diagnostics,
- g) Recommit to promoting access to affordable medicines, including generics, for scaling up access to affordable tuberculosis treatment, including the treatment of multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis

As we are looking forward at making strides on getting back on track globally it is important that we do the same at national level. In South Africa we need a strategic multisectoral initiative that will cascade the Global TB Commitments and realise them nationally by aligning UNHLM on TB Commitments with National Strategic Plan (NSP) and TB Recovery Plan as these are simultaneously processes that currently respond to TB at country level.

We, the TB Affected Communities & Civil Society we are calling for South African Government to prioritize TB:-

1. Adopt & Implement the 2023 UN HLM on TB targets by domesticating them in the NSP and National budgets making sure we are leaving no one behind as we urgently respond to TB
2. Develop a multi sectoral engagement and structured accountability platforms to account, review and report on national and regional level progress
3. Adequate funding for National TB Response inclusive of new TB R&D innovations
4. Members of Parliament (TB caucus) to develop mechanisms to hold the government accountable to ensure TB prioritization and domestic resourcing
5. Investing in Human resources for Health: Increasing the number of trained and well compensated health care workers including community health workers & volunteers and ensuring availability of essential medicines and medical supplies

#YESWECAN #YOUANDICANENDTB #ENDTB #WorldTBDay2024 #MeetTheTarget