

# TB Action Alert

June 2018

## *2018 UN High-level Meeting on Tuberculosis*

### *Introduction*

This ACTION ALERT aims to provide concrete guidance on key advocacy actions that that can be taken now.

Heads of State will gather in New York on 26 September 2018 at the United Nations General Assembly first-ever high-level meeting on tuberculosis (TB) to accelerate efforts to reach all affected people with prevention and care. The theme of the meeting is “**United to end tuberculosis: an urgent global response to a global epidemic**”.

Over the last several months, advocates from around the world have worked together to influence the outcome document. The high-level meeting should result in an ambitious Political Declaration on TB that will strengthen action and investments for the TB response, saving millions of lives.

Critical action is needed this week: **within 24 hours** (June 20 at 15h00 EST) the opportunity for UN member states to submit new text for the outcomes document will end. In addition to much-needed language that have not made it into the latest draft, there are a few issues that are unresolved because of lack of support or resistance from some governments. The next negotiation is this Friday, 22 June. These issues are:

1. **Funding targets:** There is resistance to committing to funding – including 13 USD Billion a year for TB programmes and USD 2 Billion a year for TB research and development (R&D).
2. **National-level targets:** In addition to the global testing, treatment, and prevention targets, we need national level targets that should be reflected in countries’ national strategic plans. These include targets **to reduce the testing gap and TB deaths**
  - 75% reduction in number of TB deaths by 2025 compared with 2015
  - 75% of people estimated with TB should be properly diagnosed within 3 years for countries that are reaching less than 50% of people now
3. **Access to medicines:** The rights of countries to utilize TRIPS flexibilities to protect public health must be defended in order make testing, treatment, and prevention affordable
4. **Research and development (R&D):** We will not meet global TB targets unless new treatments, diagnostics, and effective vaccines are developed. Governments should commit to ensuring equitable access to all new medicines and technologies, including by delinking the cost of R&D from the final price and volume of sales.
5. **Accountability and follow up:** The TB community is calling for an independent review body, such as a Global TB Leaders Taskforce, and a follow-up HLM in meeting in 2023.

## KEY ADVOCACY ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE NOW & GET INVOLVED IN THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING

The HLM will happen in a context where the United Nations is discussing how to align its work with the 2030 Agenda. It is important to use this opportunity to connect TB to the sustainable development agenda.

1. **Influence** your UN Mission's input. Between now and the end of June, UN Missions in New York will negotiate an outcome document to be presented and approved at the meeting in September. You can talk directly to your [UN Mission](#), but it can be more effective to influence first government contacts in your capital. It is important that you contact the Minister of Foreign Affairs in your country to establish (or strengthen) a relationship that will allow you, and your community sector colleagues, to influence the input that the Mission in New York gives during the negotiation process. You can also channel this approach through the Health Ministry, pushing them to get involved in the HLM preparation process.
2. **Advocate** for your government to send the **highest level of official representation – Ministries, President**—and for the **delegation to include representatives of civil society**, particularly from organizations of people affected by TB and key populations. You can contact other organizations in your country to develop a common strategy for this advocacy effort, including identifying individuals who would best represent issues relevant for the community sector. [see Appendix 1 for a template letter].
3. **Shape** your government's participation at the high-level meeting by influencing their **statements prior to the meeting**. It is vital that the unique perspectives and experience of the community sector are included in these preparations and deliberations.
4. **Contact other NGOs working on these issues** and be part of the global movement. You can start by checking out the Global Fund Advocates Network (GFAN) resources [here](#).

For more information or to share your experiences, please write to [TBHLM@icaso.org](mailto:TBHLM@icaso.org)

**Appendix 1: Sample Letter to national authority leading government involvement in the HLM**

**Mr./Ms./Dr.**

[insert name]

[insert position]

[insert ministry/department]

Re: Civil society involvement in the national preparation for the 2018 high-level meeting on TB

On behalf of [insert name of organization or group] and as members of civil society, I am writing to you today to respectfully offer our support and request our involvement in the preparations toward the upcoming high-level meeting on TB that will take place at the United Nations in New York on September 26, 2018.

This meeting represents an important opportunity for all stakeholders in the global response to TB to set bold new targets for TB treatment, prevention, human rights and investment [add any other priority your group/population may have]. It is important that the representatives in New York that will be negotiating the outcome document in the weeks and months to come on behalf of our country have the tools and support from the different country stakeholders. We would like to offer our support for this.

Additionally, we would like to request that [insert name of country] be represented at the highest level at the high-level meeting and that the national delegation include representatives from civil society, including non-governmental organizations and organizations and networks representing people affected by TB, TB-HIV co-infection, women, young persons, [insert here any other group/constituency].

The important role that civil society organizations play in the response to the epidemic provides a unique and grounded perspective and access to information that would be invaluable to the delegation.

In closing, we would like to respectfully request a meeting with you and your staff to discuss our contribution and meaningful involvement in the process leading up to the HLM and in the HLM as well. Please contact me at your earliest convenience to arrange for a first meeting.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Organization/group's name and address]

[phone number and email address]