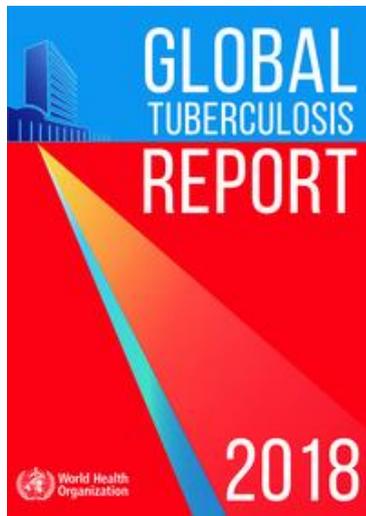


Civil Society & Communities respond to the Global TB Report 2018



The WHO Global TB Report 2018 is out – and sadly, there is very little to cheer about. The progress from 2016 to 2017 has been minimal, and unless commitments are kept and multi-sectoral accountability frameworks set up and adhered to, we are fighting a losing battle to End TB.

According to the latest data from the WHO Global TB Report, 1.6 million people died from TB including 300,000 people with HIV in 2017.

“The Global Tuberculosis report is another revelation of global irresponsibility that countries and political leaders have nurtured. In 2017 alone, World leaders have engineered the loss of over 1.6 million people to tuberculosis, a disease that is preventable and curable. This is terror to us who are affected by the disease! As affected people, we demand action, answers and assurance that by 2019 these figures will begin to reverse and we will not settle for less. The World Health Organization needs a change in mindset and approach to ensure that Human rights protection is embedded within the core of their mandate and business.” said Thokozile Phiri-Nkhoma, Stop TB Partnership Board Member representing affected communities.

Of the 10 million people who were infected with TB in 2017, two thirds of them were in eight countries: India (27%), China (9%), Indonesia (8%), the Philippines (6%), Pakistan (5%), Nigeria (4%), Bangladesh (4%) and South Africa (3%). Furthermore, it is estimated that about 1.7 billion people, 23% of the world’s population, have latent TB infection, and are at risk of developing active TB disease during their lifetime.

Gopa Kumar, TB survivor and Advisory Board member of ‘Touched by TB’ the National Coalition of TB-affected community in India, said, *“27 per cent of new global TB cases are from India. How are we going to eliminate TB by 2025? I just came back from Kalahandi”* where 800 people who have TB are waiting for their nutritional allowance. *The nutritional allowance is yet to reach people because of bottlenecks with opening a bank account. Business as usual is not going to take us anywhere. We need the entire system to be overhauled as per the goal.”*

Drug-resistant TB continues to be a health crisis. As per the report, it is estimated that worldwide in 2017, around 558,000 people developed TB that was resistant to rifampicin (RR-TB), the most effective first-line drug. Of these, 82% had multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB). Furthermore, three countries accounted for almost half of the world’s cases of MDR/RR-TB: India (24%), China (13%) and the Russian Federation (10%).

Ingrid Schoeman, TB Survivor and member of TB Proof, from South Africa said, *“Stakeholders should recognise the role of community health workers as critical to find missing people in communities with TB and link them to accessible, affordable and equitable access to services and care. Each of the 3.6 million missing people with TB need to be linked to healthcare. Ultimately, each person has a human right to health and is worth investing*

* Kalahandi is one of the poorest districts in the eastern state of Orissa, India

in. Political commitments made at the HLM brings much needed hope to TB affected communities for real change in the landscape of TB.”

Adding to our worries of minimal progress, the Global TB Report reveals that in 1 year, the number of people with MDR-TB who are currently on treatment has increased by only 9,425 (from 129,689 to 139,114) whereas 558,000 people developed MDR-TB in 2017! This is a public health emergency and this huge gap needs to be bridged immediately.

Timur Abdullaev, community representative on the Stop TB Board and member TBPeople said, *“Only 25% of people with MDR-TB are on treatment. Treatment success rate for drug sensitive TB is lower than in previous years.... They (the figures) are a clear evidence that all our approaches that we were so proud of are a complete failure. We know what works and what doesn't. But instead we are treating DOTS as a silver bullet; we are ignoring the latent TB infection, which gives a stable supply of people falling ill with TB every year -- and the aforementioned 1.6 million dying of it; we are neglecting the basic rights and needs of people with TB putting public health priorities first. And yes, we are continuously calling TB a public health emergency, but don't tackle it as such!”*

Funding for TB prevention, diagnostic and treatment services has more than doubled since 2006 but continues to fall short of what is needed and is a major challenge.

Austin Obiefuna, Director, Afro Global Alliance and STBP Board member said, *“The Global TB report is timely – it comes at a time when world leaders are meeting in New York to address TB challenges. We hope this daunting disease will get its necessary needed attention as the reflection of the new WHO TB report still reiterates the same huge funding gap for TB as the Stop TB Partnership’s Global Plan to End TB 2016–2020.”*

Underreporting and under-diagnosis of TB cases remains a major challenge. Of the 10 million people who fell ill with TB in 2017, only 6.4 million were officially recorded by national reporting systems, leaving an estimated 3.6 million people undiagnosed, or detected but not reported.

It is a wake up call for the Civil Society and affected communities to resist being divided and come together and work as a global team to make this dream a reality.

“A less than 2% annual decrease for a disease that can be diagnosed and treated is shameful despite the increased investments for TB. Where and to whom this investment has gone is something that needs to be assessed. The reality is that all of us have failed to rise to the challenge. A community-led response that supports and holds programs and

other stakeholders accountable is urgently needed in TB and until we make space for this, ending TB will be an unrealised dream. It is a wake up call for the Civil Society and affected communities to resist being divided and come together and work as a global team to make this dream a reality,” said Blessina Kumar, CEO GCTA.

“The upcoming United Nations High-Level Meeting on TB offers an unprecedented opportunity to catalyze action and commitments needed to make the lofty rhetoric around ending TB a reality. With over one-third of TB cases still going undetected and un-notified, and one in six people with this curable disease continuing to die, the status quo is unacceptable. Ensuring equitable access to the life-saving interventions we have is urgently needed and feasible. Increasing investment in TB research is also vital to develop new tools and better use the ones we have: if each country committed to just 0.1% of what it already spends on research overall to TB research, we would close the funding gap that has allowed the fatal persistence of TB,” said Erica Lessem, Deputy Executive Director for Programs Treatment Action Group.

The Global TB Report 2018 can be accessed [here](#). This statement was released on September 21, 2018.