

To: Shri. J.P Nadda, Hon. Minister, Health,
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, GOI

CC:

Smt. Sushma Swaraj – Hon. Minister, External Affairs
Shri. Arun Jaitley – Hon. Minister, Finance
Shri. Dr. Harsh Vardhan – Hon. Minister, Science & Technology
Dr. Jagdish Prasad – Director General, Health Services, MOHFW
Ms. Preeti Sudan – Secretary Health, MOHFW
Mr. Manoj Jhalani – Addl. Secretary Health and MD NHM, MOHFW
Mr. Arun Kumar Jha – Economic Advisor, MOHFW
Dr. Sunil Khaparde – DDG TB, MOHFW

7th November 2017

SUBJECT: India's engagement in the Ministerial Conference and the UN High-Level Meeting on Tuberculosis (TB)

Dear Shri. Nadda ji,

On behalf of the undersigned civil society and community groups committed to ending Tuberculosis (TB) in India by 2025, we are writing to you regarding the first-ever Ministerial Conference on TB to be held in Moscow on 16th and 17th November 2017. As a regional leader in the Tuberculosis response, we would like to urge the Indian Government to take the lead in the negotiations to be held Moscow.

As representatives of those affected by TB, we would further urge you to engage in the planning and lead up to the first-ever UN High-Level Meeting (UN HLM) on TB in 2018, and ensure a high-level delegation attends to demonstrate India's prioritization of TB. It is imperative that India, that is home to the largest number of people affected by TB globally, is at the center of negotiations, and takes the lead in defining global priorities in the coming years.

We also urge you to raise the understanding of and response to the challenges we face in TB among other government officials, including the Ministers copied to this letter. Engagement at the highest levels of the Indian government between now and the UN HLM on TB in 2018 is critically important to ensuring that meeting outcomes can be translated into the urgent investments and actions we need.



As per the WHO Global TB Report 2017, India has an estimated 28 lakh incident cases of TB each year, approximately 1.5 lakh of which are drug-resistant. Nearly 4.5 lakh Indians die of TB each year despite it being preventable and curable. Only 19 lakh of these 28 lakh cases were notified, which means that about 9 lakh cases are going unreported. And although there was an increase of nearly 2 lakh notifications in 2016 from the previous year, there was a 2% drop in treatment success in the same period.

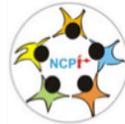
In line with our national target of ending TB in India by 2025 set by the Honorable Prime Minister, it is essential to take steps to rapidly and effectively address the persisting issues of access to care and early detection. We will also need to address underlying factors including basic health, nutrition, education and awareness and develop cross-sector solutions.

Despite the fact that 2 billion people are infected globally, and 10 million fall ill with TB each year, TB R&D remains severely neglected and increasingly dependent on public funding. We urgently require increased investments in research to develop breakthrough TB diagnostic, treatment and preventive technologies. In light of these facts, we call on you and the Indian government to commit to investing INR 300 crore in TB R&D each year between now and 2020.

Further, a portion of committed funding should be applied through a coordinated global TB research platform to be proposed at Ministerial Conference in Moscow and discussed in detail at the UN HLM on TB. Funding should come with provisions to ensure that knowledge generated is publicly available, and products developed are affordable, available, and accessible. By stepping up and setting this important example, India can help the global TB community challenge the governments of other countries to do the same.

The impact of the Ministerial Conference on TB and the first-ever UN HLM on TB will only be as large as the ambitions of the governments participating therein; we are counting on you to use these opportunities to affect change sorely overdue in the fight against TB.

We are committed to working together to leverage the unprecedented opportunities presented by the Ministerial Conference and UN HLM on TB to mobilize political will and action to End TB. We will be in contact again soon to discuss the outcomes of the Conference and how best we can support the actions necessary to fulfill those commitments made in Moscow.



Respectfully submitted,

Access to Rights and Knowledge (ARK) Foundation
Delhi Network of Positive People (DNP+)
Global Coalition of TB Activists (GCTA)
Global TB Community Advisory Board (TB CAB)
Journalists Against TB
Kolkata Rista
Nagaland Users Network (NUN)
National coalition of people living with HIV in India (NCPI+)
Network of Naga People Living with HIV/AIDS (NNP+)
Resource Group for Education and Advocacy for Community Health (REACH)
Sahara Aalhad
Society for Promotion of Youth and Masses (SPYM)
Tamilnad Network of Positive People (TNP+)
TB Alert India
Touched by TB – The Coalition of TB People in India

To further discuss points raised in the above correspondence, please contact
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