

6 November 2017

Dear H.E. Hon. Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta, CGH,

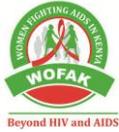
RE: Kenya's participation in the Global Ministerial Conference on Ending TB (Moscow, 16-17 November 2017), UN High-Level Meeting on Tuberculosis (TB) (2018) and increased Funding for TB in Kenya

On behalf of the undersigned civil society organisations and community groups committed to eradicating Tuberculosis (TB) in Kenya, we urge the government to ensure participation of Dr Cleopa Mailu, Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Health, at the *Global Ministerial Conference on Ending TB*, 16-17 November 2017, Moscow, Russian Federationⁱ. The Ministerial Conference is the first ever ministerial meeting on TB and hence, a watershed moment to articulate innovative strategies for TB response in Kenya and in the region.

Mr President, Dr Mailu's participation in this Ministerial Conference would result in the signing of a Ministerial declaration with bold commitments to fast track the elimination of TB globally by 2030, which is critical towards eradicating TB in Kenya. Dr Mailu's attendance would be an affirmation of high-level political commitment towards eradicating TB by the Kenyan Government. His participation during and post the Ministerial Conference will also be a build up towards next year's UN High Level Meeting (UNHLM) on TB to be attended by Heads of States. The UNHLM would be a platform for you to ensure that Kenya is a champion towards eradicating TB; leaving an unprecedented great legacy in public health and welfare!

Engagement at the highest levels of the Kenyan government now and after the UNHLM on TB in 2018 is critically important to ensuring that meeting outcomes are translated into the urgent strategic investments and relevant actions to put an end to TB and save the lives of the common *mwananchi*.

Mr. President, under your leadership, support and commitment, we can eliminate TB; a curable and preventable disease that is responsible for the deaths of 29 000 Kenyans every yearⁱⁱ. Most of those who die of TB are co-infected with HIV and we laud your commitment on fighting HIV. However, we cannot effectively address HIV without eradicating TB, particularly in a high



TB-HIV co-infection burden country like Kenya. Currently the national TB program has a funding shortfall of USD 24 million per yearⁱⁱⁱ and we would like the Government to fill this gap as donor funding has proved unsustainable and dwindling in this era.

Kenya is in the list of the 30 high TB and multidrug resistant (MDR) TB burden countries globally.^{iv} MDR-TB is a more severe form of the “normal” or drug susceptible TB (DS-TB), where the TB bacteria are resistant to more than one TB drug. MDR-TB infection is mired with lengthy diagnosis, drugs with severe adverse effects (such as deafness) and lengthy treatment duration.

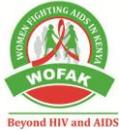
Due to the limited political will in TB globally, little research and development (R&D) has been done to emerge with new MDR-TB treatment regimens with tolerable drugs, a short treatment duration and rapid diagnostic tools that are able to detect all forms of TB (resistant and susceptible) in a few minutes. After 49 years, the two new drugs bedaquiline and delamanid were recently developed but patients in Kenya have limited access to these more tolerant drugs; less than 7 patients received each new drug this year. ^v The world is in dire need of new and better treatment regimens since a concoction of drugs are simultaneously used to treat TB. Additionally, TB vaccines in adults and in all people living with HIV do not exist. That is why based on the TB burden and GDP, we urge the Kenyan Government to allocate USD 800 000 for TB R&D per year until 2020 for new and better diagnostic tools, drugs and vaccines to be developed so that we can eradicate TB by 2030^{vi}.

Until we achieve eradication of TB in Kenya, let us all join forces in solidarity to *Mulika TB, Maliza TB*.

To further discuss any of the points raised in this correspondence in the meantime, please contact us through Khairunisa Suleiman (Khairunisa.suleiman@gmail.com, +254 727 289 223).

Respectfully submitted

Stop TB Partnership Kenya
Kenya Legal and Ethical Issues Network on HIV and AIDS (KELIN)
Women Fighting AIDS in Kenya (WOFAK)
Health NGOs Network (HENNET)



National Empowerment Network of People living with HIV/AIDS in Kenya (NEPHAK)

Talaku Community Organisation

Pamoja TB Group

Kenya AIDS NGOs Consortium (KANCO)

Waci Health

ⁱ <http://www.who.int/conferences/tb-global-ministerial-conference/en/>

ⁱⁱ WHO Global TB Report 2017; <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/9789241565516-eng.pdf>

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https://extranet.who.int/sree/Reports?op=Replet&name=/WHO_HQ_Reports/G2/PROD/EXT/TBCountryProfile&ISO2=KE&outtype=pdf

^{iv} http://www.who.int/tb/publications/global_report/high_tb_burden_country_lists_2016-2020_summary.pdf?ua=1

^v GDF_BDQ_Rpt_31-May-2017

^{vi} <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1YmOGkUEPPRm9AmcZ037hais7yi-mL9vsSTnMRoDueg/edit#gid=1950221757>