

Date: 29 August 2018

His Excellency
Mr Giorgi Margvelashvili
President of Georgia

United Nations General Assembly High Level Meeting on Ending Tuberculosis

Your Excellency,

We are writing regarding the United Nations General Assembly high-level meeting on ending tuberculosis (TB), to be held at United Nations headquarters in New York on Wednesday, 26 September 2018, during the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. The high-level meeting is being held in line with General Assembly resolution 72/268 of 4 April 2018.

The meeting will take place from 10:30 to 13:00 and from 15:00 to 18:00. It will consist of an opening segment, plenary segment, two consecutive multi-stakeholder panels and a brief closing segment.

As WHO Regional Director for Europe and Executive Director of the Stop TB Partnership we believe that the high-level meeting is an historic opportunity for governments to unite against TB, which is the world's leading infectious killer and was responsible for 1.7 million deaths in 2016. In the WHO European Region, there were almost 300 000 new TB cases in 2017, and TB/HIV coinfection has been on the rise. The Region bears the highest burden of multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) in the world, with every fifth patient being affected by this form of the disease, which is very difficult to treat. While TB mortality almost halved in the Region between 2012 and 2016, and the MDR-TB case detection rate improved from one third in 2011 to more than two thirds in 2016, too many people with TB are still not detected and die from the disease. Similarly, MDR-TB treatment outcomes have improved, yet only about half of all people with MDR-TB are cured, which is far lower than the 75% target set by the Tuberculosis Action Plan for the WHO European Region 2016–2020, and too many people spread and acquire further drug resistance. TB is curable and it must be cured, to alleviate the suffering of so many.

We therefore ask you to consider attending and making a statement at the high-level meeting to ensure that TB is elevated to a high position, and boldly maintained, on global, regional and national political and health agendas.

We have a unique opportunity to respond to the TB and drug-resistant TB epidemic with the urgency and resources it deserves, within the overall framework of universal health coverage and as envisaged in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Your leadership at this meeting and supporting its follow-up in your country would be a major asset in ensuring its success.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurance of our highest consideration.

Yours very truly,



Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab
Regional Director
WHO Regional Office for Europe



Dr Lucica Ditiu
Executive Director
Stop TB Partnership

Copy for information to:

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