

Joint Statement: Accelerating action to end tuberculosis

WHO Director-General with the WHO Civil Society Task Force on TB



The World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus met with members of the WHO Civil Society Task Force on Tuberculosis (TB) in June 2019, on the sidelines of the annual meeting of the WHO Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on TB. There was frank and constructive dialogue in the meeting, focused on: urging countries to accelerate progress to reach the targets of the political declaration of the UN High Level Meeting on TB; ensuring the provision of the best possible diagnosis and care for people with TB and drug-resistant TB, in line with the latest WHO recommendations; and strengthening meaningful engagement with civil society at all levels of the TB response. The Director-General and the WHO Civil Society Taskforce on TB agreed to issue this joint statement.

The World Health Organization and its Civil Society taskforce stand united in urging accelerated progress to end TB, in line with the commitments made by Heads of State at the first United Nations General Assembly High Level Meeting on TB. This will result in driving down suffering and deaths caused by this top infectious killer.

WHO and the Civil Society Taskforce urge countries, partners and other stakeholders to:

- 1. Accelerate action to reach the targets of the political declaration of the UNGA High Level Meeting on TB, including: treatment for 40 million people with TB and preventive treatment for at least 30 million people for 5 years, the implementation of WHO's Multisectoral Accountability Framework and its monitoring at national and global levels.**

The bold targets in the [UNGA High Level Meeting declaration](#) are intended to galvanize urgent national and global action to end the TB epidemic. Dr Tedros has sent letters to Heads of State urging an acceleration of the TB response. It is important for countries to translate global targets into national and sub-national targets to monitor progress and drive accountability. WHO is working towards enabling the adaptation and use of the new [Multisectoral Accountability Framework](#) by Member States and their partners at country, regional and global levels in 2019. The proactive engagement of civil society in this effort is vital.

2. Transition to an all-oral regimen to treat people with drug-resistant TB by World TB Day 2020.

In 2018, WHO issued [new consolidated guidelines for the treatment of people with multidrug-resistant TB \(MDR-TB\)](#) that could lead to major improvements in treatment outcomes and quality-of-life for patients. A fully oral regimen is strongly recommended as a preferred option for MDR-TB treatment. WHO and the Civil Society Taskforce strongly recommend that all countries transition to an all-oral regimen for drug-resistant TB by World TB Day 2020.

3. Identify best practices and champions to share lessons for rapid implementation of new guidelines in countries.

Some countries are making rapid progress in the implementation of the new policies for the treatment of people with MDR-TB, TB preventive treatment and Infection prevention and control. Lessons from these experiences should be documented and shared widely to encourage widescale adoption and implementation of WHO guidelines across all high burden countries.

4. Strengthen meaningful engagement of civil society and affected communities in the TB response.

The members of the Civil Society Task Force applauded the efforts of WHO Director-General Dr Tedros in engaging with civil society. The revamped Civil Society Taskforce was highlighted as a good example of meaningful civil society engagement at the global level, and was recommended to be replicated at the regional and country levels.

About the WHO Civil Society Taskforce:

In November 2018, WHO's Global TB Programme revamped the Civil Society Task Force on TB to provide a platform for discussion and harness the untapped potential in engagement with community and civil society stakeholders at all levels. The task force is a culmination of the commitments made by the WHO Director-General to strengthen civil society engagement with WHO, as discussed at several consultations with civil society representatives, starting from the first WHO Global Ministerial Conference on Ending TB which took place in Moscow in November 2017, the 15-16 January 2018 WHO consultation between civil society representatives and WHO DG and leadership, followed by a face-to-face meeting at the Delhi End TB Summit in March 2018 which culminated in the UN Interactive Civil Society Hearing and the UN High Level Meeting on TB in 2018. WHO is committed to ensuring meaningful engagement with civil society and affected community partners and Civil Society Task Force is a platform established to facilitate this process.