

**MEDIA RELEASE****Africa's responsibility to reach everyone in need of a TB test, treatment and cure**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 24 March 2014-** As Africa celebrates World TB Day with the rest of the world it is the only region in the world which is not on track to achieve a 50% reduction in TB mortality by 2015. The continent still accounts for 24% of the world's TB cases, and is home to nearly 80% of TB cases among people living with HIV. The high TB burden in Africa is linked to poverty, TB/HIV co-infection and multidrug-resistant TB. However the picture of the epidemic is shifting positively with Africa's TB treatment success rate reaching 82% in 2012. The previously increasing incidence of TB has been halted and a decline observed as a result of several years of intensive implementation of sustained efforts including TB/HIV collaborative activities. The time to respond decisively to TB is now.

"The reasons for acting now are compelling. Every US\$ 1 spent on TB generates US\$ 30 through improved health and increased productivity" said Dr. Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko, Commissioner for Social Affairs at the African Union Commission, "Fighting TB is a prerequisite for fostering economic growth, ending poverty and improving livelihoods" he added.

While we are the closest we have ever been in defeating TB forever we are facing a major funding crisis, which calls for both, accelerated innovative domestic financing, global support and immediate action to integrate TB and HIV services in African countries. This will lead to substantial cost-savings and improved health and economic outcomes.

The successive Abuja Declarations which were renewed at the 2013 Abuja +12 Special Summit on AIDS, TB and Malaria by our Africa leaders demonstrate high level commitments that need to be translated into action. The African Union Roadmap on Shared responsibility and Global Solidarity for AIDS, TB and Malaria provide the framework to translate these commitments through a well-defined development cooperation framework that is not only African sourced but results based.

"The leadership of the Africa Union and its member states has been critical to progress made in the joint fight against tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. On World TB Day 2014, we stand united in the goal to achieve zero deaths from TB in our lifetime. Let us put an end to this epidemic and reach every person in need of treatment", said Dr Lucica Ditiu, Executive Secretary of the Stop TB Partnership.

Africa continues to face a major challenge of multi-drug resistant TB with only one in every five (19%) people affected knowing their status. Six out of the eleven high burden countries, which are not on track to reach one or more targets for reduction in TB incidence, prevalence and mortality, are in Africa. However the impressive progress achieved over the last five decades shows that TB can be stopped with strong political will and adequate financial resources. Additionally new tools are now available with which to accelerate progress.

This year the African Union Commission joins the whole world in commemorating the World TB Day under the theme *Africa's responsibility to reach everyone in need of a TB test, treatment and cure*. This theme resonates with the global efforts to find, treat and cure three million people and accelerate progress towards zero TB deaths, zero infections and zero stigma. The theme is a renewed call for Africa to increase domestic financing for TB. On average African governments contribute 30% of their national TB budgets, whereas in the rest of the world governments contribute 70% on average. To reach everyone in need of treatment, care and cure we need to increase the domestic investments.

For more information, visit <http://www.africa-union.org>, [www.aidswatchafrica.org](http://www.aidswatchafrica.org)

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