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Call to Stop TB in Asia: Reversing the Epidemic

We the delegates to the Meeting of Partners' for TB Control in the South-East Asia Region and 11th Meeting of the Stop TB Coordinating Board in Jakarta, Indonesia,

Note with grave concern that Asia continues to have the highest burden of tuberculosis in the world.

Eleven out of the 22 countries globally with the highest burdens of TB are in Asia. The Asia-Pacific Region alone is home to nearly 9 million people with TB, with Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia and Pakistan accounting for half of the global burden of TB. Tuberculosis claims the lives of approximately one million people in Asia every year—every 30 seconds a person dies unnecessarily of TB. Four out of every five people in Asia affected by TB are men and women in their most productive years.

Tuberculosis, therefore, disrupts social and economic progress in countries in Asia, stigmatizing individuals, reducing household and national incomes in countries in the Region. It traps the world's poorest and most vulnerable groups in a vicious cycle of disease and poverty.

We therefore affirm that effective tuberculosis control will significantly contribute to improving health and to social and economic development in Asia.

We are encouraged by the remarkable progress that has been made in countries in Asia in providing effective TB control services through DOTS over the past decade. Treatment success rates over 85% are being consistently achieved while case detection rates have steadily risen to 66% in the Asia-Pacific Region, approaching the 70% target. Over the past 11 years, 16.5 million people with TB have been put on treatment, preventing 2 million deaths from TB in Asia. Access to life-saving tuberculosis control programmes providing high quality drugs are helping people to regain their health, go back to work and school.

We emphasize that it is critical that this momentum is maintained to reach all TB patients particularly the poorest and marginalized, and those at higher risk such as people living with HIV, to prevent the emergence of drug resistance and incurable forms of TB and, that if we fail to effectively address the epidemic in Asia at this point in time, we will fail in reversing the epidemic globally.

We also acknowledge the need to improve the scope, extent and reach of TB services in line with the new Stop TB strategy and commit to support the Global and Regional plans 2006-2015, and national multi-year plans to stop TB over the next ten years, in order to achieve the TB targets set under the Millennium Development Goals.

TOGETHER, WE CAN STOP TB IN ASIA.

We, therefore, commit ourselves to supporting the full implementation of the regional and country plans to implement quality diagnostic and treatment services to stop TB

in Asia, towards reaching the goal of halving TB prevalence and mortality by 2010 and achieving the Millennium Development Goals in all countries in Asia by 2015 by

ensuring that national TB control programmes have the means—skilled people, quality equipment, drugs and diagnostics to accelerate action against TB in Asia, through our collective will to increase and sustain resources allocated for TB, in line with the Resolution on “Sustainable Financing for TB prevention and control” adopted by the World Health Assembly in May 2005

effectively combating TB/HIV and emerging drug resistance in Asia through promoting and facilitating joint action by TB and HIV programmes to effectively care for those dually affected, preventing the emergence of drug resistance through sustaining effective DOTS programmes, while at the same time, supporting the development and application of internationally recommended best practices for the diagnosis and treatment of drug resistant TB

forging effective international and national partnerships that include ministries, government organizations, the private health sector, industry, nongovernmental organizations, private individuals, foundations, academia and the community at large, to ensure that diagnostic and treatment practices that are in accordance with the International Standards for TB Care reach all TB patients in Asia,

also tapping into the potential in Asia to promote innovate interventions for better implementation and effective utilization of available resources and to contribute to global efforts to develop new tools and enhance manufacturing capacity for drugs, diagnostics, vaccines that will be the cornerstones of future TB control.

Recognizing the enormity of the task ahead and that significant technical, operational and financial resources will need to be sustained for many years to come to effectively combat TB in Asia,

We call upon all national governments, organizations and agencies and other partners in Asia and around the world to actively support this Call for Action to Stop TB in Asia.