



World Health
Organization

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR Africa

Message of Dr Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa, on World TB Day 2018



Dr. Matshidiso Moeti,
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On **24 March** every year, the global community rallies together on **World TB Day** to focus on how best to defeat tuberculosis (TB), an old disease that can be prevented and treated, but continues to afflict and kill many people.

This year's theme is **"Wanted: Leaders for**

a TB-free World". It seeks to build momentum towards the first UN General Assembly high-level meeting on TB in September this year, when Heads of State and governments and key players will resolve to end TB through urgent, global actions to achieve a TB-free world.

Although the African Region has made good progress in controlling TB, we still have the world's highest levels of the disease, and only half of existing TB cases are being found by our health systems. We have the most patients infected with both HIV and TB, and are seeing alarming increases in the forms of TB that resist treatment with common medicines. Finally, governments are contributing only a quarter of the resources needed to provide adequate TB services, and 40% of needs remain unfunded.

A TB-free world will only be achieved through leaders who champion efforts to end TB at local level. At the **"First Ministerial Conference on Ending TB"** in Moscow in November 2017, 75 ministers

from the African Region committed to end TB. Member States of the African Union finalized a Common African Position on TB (CAP-TB) on the sidelines of that historic conference.

Leaders have tremendous influence to build strong partnerships and commitment to end the TB epidemic at every level. I therefore call on Governments, Parliamentarians and Policy-makers to drive ambitious plans that will accelerate TB control at national level.

I call upon health workers, non governmental organizations and technicians to maximize the use of proven methods to diagnose and successfully treat all types of TB, and for researchers to do the scientific studies needed to inform policies to help improve and monitor TB services.

I call upon community leaders, patient advocacy groups and people affected by TB to partner with Government to ensure access to treatment for all.

I strongly urge Governments to scale up domestic funding for TB control and take responsibility for essential medicines and laboratory supplies. Furthermore, governments should push for universal coverage with proven high quality services. Since TB is found in communities where human rights and dignity are often overlooked, Governments should lead actions beyond the health sector to address environmental, economic and other factors which increase the risk of TB.

The implementation of these actions requires strong leadership. **We want leaders for a TB-free World.**

WHO in the African Region and the African Union Commission are setting up ways to monitor progress towards ending the TB epidemic by 2030 as called for in the Sustainable Development Goals and End TB Strategy. As Regional Director for the African Region, I will strive continuously to support countries to accelerate actions for a TB-free world.