

The African Civil Society Platform on Health and GFAN Africa Urge African and World Leaders to Urgently Address Drug Resistant TB

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Drug Resistant TB: Time to Act is now

Tuberculosis is killing more people than any other infectious disease; close to [two million people died](#) from TB last year. The rise of these reported TB cases is a big cause for concern.

“But the emergence of new superbugs that can resist even the most powerful antibiotics should make bigger headlines”, Says Rosemary Mburu, Executive Director, WACI Health. “While antimicrobial resistance is going to affect treatment for many health conditions, drug-resistant TB is particularly concerning as it accounts for about one-third of all antimicrobial resistance deaths”.

The growth of these forms of drug-resistant TB has a potentially disastrous impact in the fight against the disease. In 2015, there were approximately 580,000 cases of drug-resistant TB. Only 20 percent of those were diagnosed, treated or reported to national health systems across the world. Drug-resistant TB ended up killing 250,000 of people that year.

“This form of the disease now threatens many recent gains made against the response to TB and HIV globally,” said Carol Nawina- Kachenga, Executive Director, CITAM+. “Over the last few decades, the global community has worked so hard to defeat HIV. Today, Tuberculosis, the world’s most infectious disease is threatening to reverse these gains by killing our communities. It is killing our grandmothers in Kinshasa, our mothers in Soweto, our brothers in Ndola and children¹ all over Africa. It is pushing us further into poverty and killing our dreams.”

“Africa is home to four of the 27 global high multidrug-resistant TB burden countries: Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria and South Africa.” Says Olayide Akanni, Executive Director, Journalists Against AIDS, Nigeria. “ Our people continue to suffer in the face of lack of new drugs to treat drug-resistant TB and ineffectiveness of existing treatments, which are long and often cause adverse side effects.”

A widespread epidemic of extensively drug-resistant (XDR) tuberculosis is also [unfolding in South Africa](#), where cases have increased substantially since 2002. Alone, the country contributed 562 of the 4,040 XDR-TB cases enrolled on treatment globally in 2014. “This is a time bomb in South Africa and President Jacob Zuma must champion TB R&D in South Africa and globally, through his G20 membership,” says Daniel Molokele, Steering Committee Member, CISPHA.

Global health partners must halt and reverse the growth of drug-resistant TB. The time to act is now.

On World TB day 2017, we, members of the [CISPHA](#) and GFAN Africa, united in our resolve to ending TB:

1. Join other global health organizations in calling for TB to be added to the World Health Organization’s list of high priority drug-resistant bacteria. Our call comes in the wake of WHO’s

¹ In high burden TB settings it has been noted that 15-20% of all TB cases are among children.

first ever list of antibiotic-resistant pathogens released as part of the effort to address the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance. Currently, that list does not include TB.

2. Call upon African governments to prioritize tuberculosis in national health and development agendas by increasing investments in research and development for TB to support creation and uptake of new tools and drugs to respond to drug-resistant TB.
3. In the run-up to the upcoming G20 meeting in Hamburg, Germany, in July, we call upon G20 leaders – including President Jacob Zuma – to demonstrate leadership in responding to drug-resistant TB by committing to fund new research to develop better drugs and treatment regimens to respond to the disease.

About CISPHA: [The Civil Society Platform on Health in Africa \(CISPHA\)](#), is an Africa regional advocacy platform, which aims at a coordinated Civil Society response on health in Africa. The Platform was launched in 2009, when 60 networks and network organizations, joined forces to utilize evidence for Advocacy and Lobby at continental level, linking the efforts at national and regional levels to influence decision processes at the African Union and its institutions. CISPHA is hosted by [WACI Health](#).

About GFAN Africa: Nested within CISPHA, the Global Fund Advocates Network (GFAN) Africa is a regional hub for [GFAN](#). GFAN Africa unites voices and efforts from all over Africa to support a fully funded Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.