



Treatment Action Group

Tuberculosis Multistakeholder Hearing — TAG Statement

Monday, May 8, 2023

This statement on the right of people with TB to benefit from scientific progress is delivered by Mike Frick on behalf of Treatment Action Group (TAG).

1. We are an independent, activist, and community-based research and policy think tank based in New York, in consultative status with ECOSOC, and committed to accelerating the vital research and innovation required to end the TB epidemic.
2. The theme of this year's High-Level Meeting on TB spotlights the importance of "advancing science, finance and innovation, and the equitable distribution of their benefits, to end TB."
3. This theme speaks directly to the need of the hour: intensified research and financing to develop and distribute new and improved technologies for preventing, diagnosing, and treating TB. The theme also mirrors the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights establishing the human right of everyone to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications (i.e., the right to science).
4. As member states prepare to negotiate the political declaration on TB, Treatment Action Group urges member states to explicitly recognize the right to science as a guiding framework for action to end TB.
5. Upholding the right of people with TB to benefit from scientific progress will require states to commit to support TB research in three ways:
6. First, states must advance TB science by increasing investments in TB research and development and creating research enabling environments. The Stop TB Partnership has called for states to commit to mobilize \$5 billion a year for TB research, including \$1.25 billion per year for TB vaccines.
7. There will be no end to the TB epidemic without developing new TB vaccines. TB vaccine science is at a place of unprecedented promise with five candidate vaccines ready for late-stage clinical trials. Substantially increased investments are required to ensure these critical studies move forward at a pace that can deliver a new TB vaccine ahead of the 2030 SDG deadline. This will require that each member state contributes its fair share to TB R&D and approaches TB research as a shared responsibility.
8. Second, governments should direct research investments in a purposive fashion to fill unmet innovations needs of groups most vulnerable to TB, including children, pregnant people, people living with HIV, and other populations who are frequently excluded from studies. Governments must

commit to ensuring TB research is needs-driven, evidence-based, conducted openly and collaboratively, and guided by the principles of affordability, effectiveness, efficiency, and equity.

9. Third, information collected by Treatment Action Group shows that nearly 70% of funding for TB research comes from the public sector. It is therefore essential that governments require access conditionalities for publicly funded research and greater transparency of research inputs and results. These conditionalities are about maximizing public return on the public investments that drive TB research.

10. Access conditionalities and transparency requirements should span the R&D continuum.

- Scientists require access to the means, methods and materials of scientific discovery.
- Communities affected by TB have a right to participate in research as more than just clinical trial participants and have a right to access affordable, evidence-based technologies.
- Governments and donors also require access to data on pricing, intellectual property, manufacturing and research costs to make informed decisions in the manufacturing, purchasing, and procurement of health technologies.

11. These access conditionalities should ensure that incentives for innovation are independent from rights to market exclusivity and that investments in research and development are delinked from the final prices and volumes of sale of health products so that the benefits of scientific progress against TB can be enjoyed by all, while also promoting appropriate use.

12. In closing, Treatment Action Group urges the co-facilitators and member states to make TB research – its financing, transparency, and the equitable access and distribution of its benefits – a central focus of the political declaration.

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