

**To:** Mr. José Luis Castro, Executive Director  
Dr. E. Jane Carter, President  
Mr. Prabodh Bhambal, Deputy Executive Director  
Prof. Guy Marks, Vice President  
Prof. Xiaolin Wei, Secretary General  
Mr. Louis-James de Viel Castel, Treasurer  
Ms. Stacie Stender, Chair, Coordinating Committee of Scientific Activities

International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union)  
68, boulevard Saint-Michel  
75006 Paris, France

**CC:** Ms. Carol Nyirenda, Board Member  
Nomampondo Barnabas, Civil Society Liaison Officer

24 August 2016

**Open letter re: Hosting Union World Conferences on Lung Health in High Burden Countries**

Dear Members of the Union Board and Executive Management Team,

We are a group of individuals and organisations with an interest in the global response to tuberculosis (TB), and are interested in making sure upcoming World Conferences on Lung Health are opportunities to build on the momentum from the last conference in Cape Town, South Africa, and continue to increase the political will needed to combat TB and lung disease.

We are writing to express our concern over the selection of hosting cities for World Conferences on Lung Health. Of the 10 Union World Conferences on Lung Health from 2007 to 2016, six were held in Europe (none of which were in Eastern Europe), two in Africa, one in North America and one in Asia. The two conferences held in Cape Town are the only two held in a TB high burden country in this 10-year period.

We believe that building a stronger global TB movement and garnering greater political will in the most affected countries requires that the conference should more regularly take place in countries with high burdens of TB and lung disease. The Union World Conference on Lung Health is a powerful tool to mobilize communities and engage countries to take steps to improve their health policies and showcase investments in domestic health resources. As a TB community, we must build on the momentum from Cape Town in 2015 and continue to unleash the political will needed to end TB. Many high TB burden countries have suitable infrastructure for hosting the conference, such as Brazil, Kenya, Tanzania, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Philippines, Thailand, Ukraine, and Vietnam. Furthermore, hosting Union conferences in high-income countries such as the U.K. poses financial,

visa, and logistical barriers that prevent representatives from the communities most affected by TB and lung disease from being able to attend.

We understand that there are various cost, security, and logistical factors involved in deciding on host cities. In some cases, such factors may make it more challenging to hold the conference in high burden countries. We do not, however, accept that these challenges are a sufficient reason for not taking the conference to high burden countries.

**We ask that a Board decision be taken that, at a minimum, every second Union Conference should be held in a country with a high burden of TB and/or lung disease.** When conferences are held in high income countries, selection criteria should include that the country have in place ethical and scientifically sound and updated TB guidelines (the U.K.'s requirement for chest X-rays for people applying for longer-term visas is a notable example of an outdated and potentially discriminatory practice). This will require the Union Board to proactively encourage and facilitate the bids of high burden countries. Such facilitation is important work that the Union must engage in and as members of civil society we are prepared to provide our support so that this important work takes place.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and request your response to be directed to our representative, Carol Nyirenda, by September 8, 2016

Sincerely,

**Organizational signatories**

ACTION Global Health Advocacy Partnership, Global  
Advance Access & Delivery (AA&D), Global  
AIDS and Rights Alliance of Southern Africa (ARASA), Southern Africa  
Africa Civil Society for the Treatment Care and Support of TB Patients in Nigeria  
(ACT!Nigeria)  
Afro Global Alliance, Africa  
Drug-Resistant TB Scale-up Treatment Action Team (DR-TB STAT), Global  
Global Coalition of TB Activists (GCTA), Global  
Global TB Community Advisory Board (TB CAB), Global  
Good Health Educators Initiative(GHEI), Nigeria  
Kenya Ethical and Legal Issues Network of HIV and AIDS (KELIN), Kenya  
Makueni Community Based Organizations Consortium (MACOBOC), Kenya  
Nagaland Users' Network, India  
Partners In Health, Global  
Project Healthcarers, Ukraine  
RESULTS International Australia, Australia  
Rural-Urban Women And Children Development Agency (RUWACDA)  
Section 27, South Africa  
Stop TB Partnership – Kenya, Kenya  
TB Photovoice, USA

TB/HIV Care Association, South Africa  
TB Proof, Global  
Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), South Africa  
Treatment Action Group (TAG), USA  
The Tunisian Center for Public Health, Tunisia  
Wote Youth Development Projects (WOYDEP), Kenya

**Individual signatories**

*Institutions are listed as affiliations only and do not indicate institutional endorsement*

Lusiana Aprilawati, Indonesia  
Alberto Colorado, USA  
Dr. Helen Cox, University of Cape Town, South Africa  
Prof. Keertan Dheda, University of Cape Town, South Africa  
Dr. Jennifer Furin, Case Western Reserve University and the Sentinel Project, USA  
Molly Franke, ScD, Harvard Medical School, USA  
Dr. Maricelle Gler, Makati Hospital, Philippines  
Dr. Rosa Herrera, ISESALUD, Mexico  
Sibusiso Hlatjwako, Aeras, South Africa  
Dr. Robert Horsburgh, Boston University School of Public Health, USA  
Dr. Elizabeth Haraus, Military HIV Research Program, USA  
Dr. Petros Isaakidis, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)/Doctors Without Borders,  
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