

PRESS RELEASE

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OBASANJO, BROWN AND GATES CALL ON WORLD LEADERS TO FUND NEW PLAN TO STOP TUBERCULOSIS

\$31 billion funding increase needed to prevent 14 million tuberculosis deaths by 2015

Gates Foundation pledges to triple tuberculosis funding over next decade

Davos, Switzerland, 27 January 2006 – Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown and Bill Gates today called on world leaders to rally behind a major new action plan to treat 50 million people and prevent 14 million tuberculosis deaths worldwide over the next ten years.

The Global Plan to Stop Tuberculosis (2006-2015) – released today by the Stop Tuberculosis Partnership, a coalition of more than 400 organizations worldwide – calls for global tuberculosis spending to triple over the next decade to increase access to tuberculosis control programmes and accelerate research on new tools to fight the disease.

Chancellor Brown called for the G8 to formally designate tuberculosis a top priority at its next meeting in July, and urged G8 member countries to pledge immediate new funding to implement the Global Plan.

“I welcome the Gates Foundation’s announcement today. For far too long, world leaders have ignored the global tuberculosis epidemic, even as it causes millions of needless deaths each year,” Chancellor Brown said. “Today’s plan demonstrates that the fight against tuberculosis is one we can win. I hope that the G8 will make fighting tuberculosis a top priority.”

President Obasanjo said implementing the new tuberculosis plan should be also a major priority for African leaders. Nigeria will be hosting an African Heads of State meeting in May, at which tuberculosis is likely to be addressed.

“The Global Plan is fundamental for Africa, where tuberculosis was declared an emergency by 46 countries in 2005,” Obasanjo said. “We hope the African Union will endorse this plan, and call upon African governments to commit their share of the resources needed to implement it.”

Fully implementing the Global Plan would cost an estimated \$56 billion over the next decade – including \$47 billion for tuberculosis control and \$9 billion for research and development – an overall increase of \$31 billion over currently projected funding. Based on current funding trends, the plan estimates at least 40% of the additional funding needs to come from the G8 and other donor countries, while the remaining 60% should come from the governments of tuberculosis-affected countries.

Gates Foundation Pledges to Triple Tuberculosis Funding

To help achieve the plan’s goals, Bill Gates announced that the Gates Foundation will triple its funding for tuberculosis over the next decade, with a focus on supporting research and development. To date, the foundation has committed more than \$300 million for tuberculosis. Today’s pledge will take this total to more than \$900 million by 2015.

“This plan makes a compelling case for greater investment in tuberculosis,” said Gates. “We’re willing to triple our funding for tuberculosis, and we urge others to do the same. If we have the chance to save 14 million lives, and a clear plan to make it happen, we have an obligation to act.”

Gates emphasized that new tools are urgently needed to fight tuberculosis – the current treatment regimen for tuberculosis takes at least six months to complete, and approximately 300,000 cases of tuberculosis every year are resistant to multiple tuberculosis drugs.

New Plan to Provide Tuberculosis Treatment to 50 Million People in 10 Years, Help Achieve MDGs

Full funding of the new Global Plan announced today will help achieve the Millennium Development Goal to have “halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of tuberculosis”. Key objectives of the plan include the following:

- **Improve treatment access** – prevent 14 million tuberculosis deaths and provide treatment to 50 million people.
- **New drugs** – develop and distribute the first new tuberculosis treatment regimen in nearly 40 years.
- **New vaccine** – develop a safe and affordable vaccine to improve upon the existing vaccine, which has been in use since the early 1900s.
- **New diagnostics** – develop efficient, effective and affordable diagnostic tests for tuberculosis – the first in more than a century.

“We have a unique historic opportunity to stop tuberculosis, but we must act now,” said Dr Marcos Espinal, Executive Secretary of the Stop Tuberculosis Partnership. “The challenge now is for people to work together in putting the plan into action, in order to stop one of the oldest and most lethal diseases known to humanity. This plan tells the world exactly what we need to do in order to defeat this global killer.”

Dr Espinal noted that the plan will build upon important progress against tuberculosis over the past several years. Since 2000, estimated spending on tuberculosis control in the 22 hardest-hit countries has increased from US\$800 million to US\$1.2 billion; as a result, the number of patients receiving tuberculosis treatment in these countries more than doubled.

The Plan will be implemented based on a new Stop Tuberculosis Strategy developed by the World Health Organization (WHO), which houses the Stop Tuberculosis Partnership. The strategy has six key elements: optimizing and sustaining access to the existing tuberculosis treatment and control strategy – known as DOTS; adapting DOTS to respond to challenges such as HIV/AIDS and Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis; strengthening health systems; partnering and engaging with all care providers; empowering patients and communities to fight tuberculosis; and promoting research and development for new drugs, diagnostics and vaccines.

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About The Stop TB Partnership:

The Stop TB Partnership was established in 2000 to realize the goal of eliminating tuberculosis (TB) as a public health problem and, ultimately, to obtain a world free of TB. It comprises a network of international organizations, countries, donors from the public and private sectors, governmental and nongovernmental organizations and individuals that have expressed an interest in working together to achieve this goal. Its secretariat is hosted by the World Health Organization in Geneva. For further information on the Stop TB Partnership or the Global Plan to Stop TB, please go to www.stoptb.org or contact the communications adviser - Michael Luhan at luhanm@who.int or +41 (0) 22 791 1379.

About the Global Health Initiative of the World Economic Forum

The goal of the Global Health Initiative (GHI) of the World Economic Forum is to facilitate and stimulate greater business engagement in the fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria. To achieve this goal, the GHI works closely with the World Economic Forum's member companies as well as UNAIDS, the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria and the World Health Organization's Stop TB and Roll Back Malaria partnerships. A broad range of NGOs and other members of civil society, as well as governments, have also joined the efforts of the GHI. The GHI provides a unique platform for dialogue, partnership and action on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria involving both the private and the public sector. It coordinates a community of more than 230 companies that are confronting similar fundamental health challenges to their operations. In particular, the GHI provides a forum to share experiences, to define generally accepted standards and to act as an advocate for the private sector. For further information please go to <http://www.weforum.org/globalhealth>



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