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**The Global Fund's Role
as a Strategic and Responsible Investor
in Tuberculosis**

Address to the Global Fund

New Delhi

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Let me express from the very outset my heartfelt thanks to Mr. Rajat Rupata, Chairman of the Board, and to Professor Kazatchkine for giving me the opportunity to address this distinguished and influential audience on the topic of TB.
- Let me also congratulate the Board of the Global Fund for the remarkable job you have been doing and praise your commitment and your strategic vision.
- The new strategy, agreed by this Board last year, clearly shows your commitment to accelerate the global effort to save lives over the time frame of 2010 and beyond. I am sure that your strategic vision underpinned by the lessons learned since the creation of the Fund and by the urgency of scaling responses to the three major diseases worldwide, will allow the Fund to build on its strengths and to respond effectively to emerging challenges of global health.

Ladies and Gentlemen

- Let me say a few words on TB.

- As any other disease TB is a question of human rights. What is at stake here is the right to protect and to be protected. Moreover, tackling TB is a true humanitarian emergency.
- TB or not TB, as in Shakespeare, is a vital dilemma.

Excellencies

- TB is an affordably curable disease, but it still kills 1.7 million people annually, far more than the number killed in the natural or man-made catastrophes that make headlines - just think of it!
- TB affects mostly people in their productive life as 85% of TB patients are people aged 15-49 years – just imagine what it means in terms of social disruption, let alone for a family and for individuals!
- The whole economy of a country suffers as the workforce is reduced, productivity falls, revenues drop and markets shrivel. According to figures, TB is estimated to reduce 4% of GDP annually in countries with a high burden of TB.

- Let's take the example of this country - although the economic burden of TB has fallen thanks to good progress in TB control, still some 325,000 people die from TB each year, most of them in their active working years – just figure out that we are talking of economic loss of around USD 23.7 billion per annum!
- A recent Report commissioned by the Stop TB Partnership, released by the World Bank strongly suggest that if countries invest in TB-prevention, along lines defined in the Global Plan to Stop TB the benefits will be 10 times higher.

Excellencies

- Controlling tuberculosis contributes to socio-economic development and poverty alleviation among families, communities and nations, and facilitates global human security as well.
- In these hard times of financial crisis, it is rather suspicious to talk about investment. But nevertheless, the return on TB investment is high and it is good value for money.
- Look again at the case of this country: the return on investment has a medium return of USD 125 per dollar spent.
- This is a true transfer of wealth from rich to poor, a transfer of wealth from the present to the future, provided indeed that all this complies with a number of criteria.

- You, the members of the Board, know what the criteria are. You have adapted them to better support the needs and realities of the recipient country. You have innovated to address the two major challenges in global health – ensuring sustainable funding and improving ownership of national health programs. You have done all this for greater impact of your grants.

- Still on the topic of TB, let me draw your attention to three hot topics already mentioned here.

- Firstly – MDR/XDR-TB and TB/HIV – they are the two greatest threats to TB control because they undermine the current achievements of 60% case detection and 85% cure rate.

- Let me emphasize the dramatic need to develop innovative actions to accelerate case detection and effective treatment of these cases. If you have doubts, just think that almost 40% of the estimated 9.2 million new cases of infectious TB per year worldwide are not detected.

- Allow me to stress that it is also crucial to implement core TB/HIV collaborative services and therefore to include and implement significant, robust TB interventions in HIV/AIDS proposals and HIV/AIDS interventions in TNB proposals. These two conditions should become mandatory in all applications to the Global Fund's grants.

- Full achievement of 2010 and 2015 targets is at risk unless we face the most pressing challenges requiring rapid and ambitious action.
- Secondly – Proposals for rounds 9 and 10.
- The Global Fund should encourage countries to submit ambitious, robust and well articulated proposals for rounds 9 and 10, National Applications Strategies and Rolling Continuation Channels (RCC) to scale up the Global Plan activities and components of the Stop TB Strategy.
- This is a key issue to achieve 2010 and 2015 Global targets.
- Third point – funding for TB
- You know that the Global Fund is the largest single financier of tuberculosis control today. It accounts for two thirds of all external development assistance for TB control.
- But, as you might remember, only 14% of the total funding committed by the Global Fund goes to tuberculosis
- It is not really that much! We can do better than that – because after all, every death from TB is one death too many.
- Let's face it: Global Fund financing is not sufficiently filling the gap in financing needed to achieve the goals, especially with regard to MDR-TB interventions and TB/HIV, as well as innovations to reduce the case detection gap.

Excellencies

- We are living in complex times of major economic and financial crisis. This crisis is entirely man-made. It is a crisis due to lack of appropriate regulation, monitoring and accountability.
- Global health is one of the rare fields where spectacular progress has been achieved during the 20th century. But good health is still unequally distributed.
- Moving into the 21st century, we need to recognize that half of the world's population has been left behind, carrying a vast burden of preventable diseases.
- Can we do more? Can we do better?
- Yes, we can, we should, we must do more, faster and better.
- We have to improve, to adapt and to innovate. We have to build on close cooperation between the Global Fund, the UN agencies, such as the World Bank, WHO and UNAIDS and other partners from civil society including communities and people affected.

- Regarding TB, we need to improve the virtuous triangle of Global Fund, WHO and Stop TB Partnership.

- I am happy to learn that a Memorandum of Understanding between the Stop TB Partnership and the Global Fund has been signed this morning. I also know that this Board has made a decision on building and sustaining a response that halves TB mortality and prevalence. This is good news.

- But there is also bad news.

- Technical assistance is still a problem. I have heard complaints in every country that I have visited. I have witnessed concerns within the UN agencies and partners within the Stop TB Partnership about their capacity to respond to demands and requests for providing technical assistance without the needed funding.

- There are a number of other big gaps to be filled.

- Greater coordination is still lacking.

- Greater integration between diseases and health systems is dramatically needed.

- Better National Health Programs, better implementation and better monitoring are possible only if national ownership of these programs is improved and closer association of communities and affected people is achieved.

- Greater coherence on the donors' side is also highly advisable to achieve greater impact and effectiveness – let's put our limited resources to better use, avoiding creating useless competition between bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Excellencies

- I have been talking for about 8 minutes. This means that since I started, 24 people have died of TB.
- Imagine how costly inaction is in terms of human lives!
- Most of these individuals are part of the bottom billion people who are living and dying in fourteenth-century conditions.
- Saving these lives is our real challenge!
- We can, we have to do better.

Many thanks