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**Statement from UN Special Envoy on Tuberculosis Eric P. Goosby
on the Tuberculosis Outbreak in Rural Alabama**

The outbreak of TB in rural Alabama is not only heartbreaking because of the deaths it is causing, it is frustrating because TB can be prevented, treated and cured. The situation, described in the January 19th edition of the New York Times, is dire. While most people think of TB as a disease that does not affect the U.S., Marion, Alabama is experiencing a TB outbreak that is worse than in many developing countries. And Marion is not alone. As more people are tested, it is evident that TB is beginning to spread to other regions of Alabama. Unfortunately, in many areas of the country, funding for community education and outreach on TB by local health departments is scarce or non-existent.

In developing and developed countries alike, the same obstacles to seeking treatment are found – limited access to care, overwhelming poverty and stigma and discrimination. We can no longer close our eyes to these obstacles here or abroad. TB takes lives that can easily be saved.

President Obama and Congress have traditionally been supportive of global health programs. In a few weeks, President Obama will put forth his final budget proposal. During the following months, Congress will debate how much money to allocate to a host of programs, including those that work to defeat TB. As the President and Congress prepare their budgets, the serious outbreak in Alabama is a stark reminder that TB is not only the world's problem, it is America's problem too.