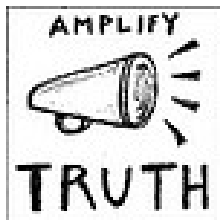


## Coverage from the 39<sup>th</sup> Union World Conference on Lung Health

### Mandate set for increased TB treatment, diagnostics

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A clear mandate for the acceleration of research and access to quality anti-tuberculosis (TB) drugs and diagnostics has been set by delegates at a pre-conference meeting of the 39th World Conference on Lung Health in Paris this month.

At a special session of the drug resistance mobilization sub-group of the multi-drug resistant TB working group led by the Stop TB Partnership and WHO, key TB control stakeholders called for more effective treatment and diagnostics as well as a restoration of dignity and human rights in affected communities.

The innovative session involved the screening of an hour-long documentary containing a number of short presentations by people with drug-resistant TB, people living with HIV, community activists and WHO experts.

A person is considered to have drug-resistant TB when first-line medicines have little effect. Second-line drugs are then the only option available but they are much more expensive than first-line drugs as the market is less developed. Second-line drugs are often impossible to find in the areas where they are most needed.

Dr Paul Nunn, Director of the Stop TB Drug Resistance Unit, gave delegates at the session a global overview of the challenge posed by drug-resistant TB while Paula Akugizibwe from the AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa shared frontline stories from people most-affected by the disease.

The lack of quality diagnostics and laboratory capacity in many countries hit hard by TB and HIV has made treating drug-resistant strains of the disease a matter of guesswork, according to Alberto Colorado who led the special session in Paris.

The little data available on drug-resistant TB shows that about 500,000 new cases of multi-drug resistant TB (MDR-TB) are recorded each year. Less than 3% of these people have access to quality care and many are from the most marginalized sections of lower socio-economic communities.

As a result, drug-resistant TB is spreading fast, fuelled by the HIV pandemic and the slow pace of actions against the disease.

Celina Menezes, one of the Presidents of the World Care Council and Advocacy Officer for the Indian Network of people living with HIV told delegates that advocacy and global mobilization efforts clearly needed to be increased.