



*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

**Message from**

**DR HUSSEIN A. GEZAIRY**

**REGIONAL DIRECTOR**

**WHO EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION**

**on the occasion of**

**WORLD TUBERCULOSIS DAY**

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Amid the warnings from WHO in its recent report *Anti-tuberculosis drug resistance in the world* concerning the need to address tuberculosis drug resistance, the Eastern Mediterranean Region continues to struggle against tuberculosis, losing more than 110 000 human lives every year. This is a region which is home to some of the fastest growing economies in the world, yet here in the 21st century, this preventable and curable disease continues to cause human suffering and the loss of much needed productivity, increasing the burden on economies and tightening the poverty trap.

There is hope! In recent years, the Region has reported improved case detection and success rates, with some countries performing well and others working hard to improve. Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Somalia and Tunisia have all remained successful in meeting the global targets of 70% case detection rate and 85% success rate. Bahrain and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya have achieved the 70% case detection target. However, a lot still needs to be done in the Region. The average case detection rate is 53%, against the target of 70%. The responsibility to save the lives of millions across the Region, and to protect future generations, demands the collective wisdom of all—governments, private sector, civil society, media and donor agencies.

This year, yet another step will be taken by the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean in the direction of making the Region tuberculosis-free. The Eastern Mediterranean Stop TB Partnership will be launched in May this year, in the presence of delegates from across the world. The Partnership, it is envisioned, will be a promise from governments, civil society, the media, and the corporate and private sector to work together. It is expected that the Partnership will be a catalyst for empowering and promoting national and regional partnerships; will foster coordination; strengthen and coordinate technical and financial resources; promote greater public and political commitment and investment in Stop TB, addressing the gaps in implementing the regional plan to Stop TB; and enhance public awareness.

The global theme for World TB Day 2008 is “I am stopping TB “ أقوم بدوري في دحر “السل”. This day is about honouring the lives and stories of people affected by tuberculosis: women, men and children who have fought tuberculosis, as well as nurses, doctors, researchers, community workers, and the numerous others who have contributed to the global fight. The theme emphasizes the need to recognize the importance of each one of the partners; to capitalize on diversity, strengthening bonds through similarities, and to aim for a better tomorrow. Only if each one of the countries of the Region is committed to stopping tuberculosis through a joint, effective and strong collaborative partnership, will we have the power to face the challenges and ultimately end the suffering of millions. “I am stopping TB”—one region, one voice, one mission.

Let us all, on this day, ask ourselves, What am I doing to Stop TB?