

GLOBAL TUBERCULOSIS REPORT

Warning: This report is out-of-date. In particular, entire time-series of TB disease burden estimates are updated every year. For the latest data and analysis, please see the most recent edition of the global TB report.

2020



GLOBAL TUBERCULOSIS REPORT 2020



World Health
Organization

Global tuberculosis report 2020

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Message

from the WHO Director-General



Two years ago, the nations of the world gathered for the first United Nations (UN) high-level meeting on tuberculosis (TB). Heads of State and other leaders made bold commitments to accelerate the response to end the world's top infectious disease killer. Those commitments have offered hope for ending the death and

suffering of millions worldwide who are struggling with TB – a preventable and treatable disease.

This year's World Health Organization (WHO) global TB report comes at a critical time. The report provides an opportunity to reflect on progress made in the fight against TB, but also to highlight the risks that threaten to erode the gains we have made.

There is good news. The number of people treated for TB has grown since the UN high level meeting, with over 14 million people reached with TB care in 2018 and 2019. The number of people provided with TB preventive treatment has quadrupled since 2015, from 1 million in 2015 to over 4 million in 2019.

These are impressive achievements that we must celebrate. However, equitable access to quality and timely diagnosis, prevention, treatment and care remains a challenge. Accelerated action worldwide is urgently needed if we are to meet our targets by 2022.

The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to unwind the gains made over recent years. The impact of the pandemic on TB services has been severe. Data collated by WHO from high TB burden countries show sharp drops in TB notifications in 2020. Our modelling suggests that a 50% drop in TB case detection over 3 months could result in 400 000 additional TB deaths. In response, WHO is working closely with our partners and civil society to support countries in maintaining continuity of essential health services, including for TB.

COVID-19 is demonstrating that health is not only an outcome of development: it is also a prerequisite for social, economic and political stability. Although the pandemic is a setback to our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, we cannot allow it to become an excuse for not achieving those goals. Instead, we must use it as motivation.

We are all accountable for delivering on the commitments we have made. But none of us can meet those commitments alone. We can only do it together. We need all hands-on-deck. That's why WHO has developed the Global Strategy for TB Research and Innovation and the Multisectoral Accountability Framework for TB. WHO has also updated its TB policies and guidelines, and is supporting countries to adapt and use these tools to translate commitments into actions and to monitor, report and review progress, while engaging leaders, relevant sectors, civil society and other stakeholders.

We're encouraged to see high-level leadership on multisectoral accountability in several countries, including India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Russian Federation and Viet Nam. In all, 86 countries have reported that a national multisectoral accountability mechanism for high-level review is in place.

But ending TB is not just a job for governments. Everyone has a role to play, from those in the corridors of power to those in the villages and streets where people live and die with TB.

To make sure everyone's voice is heard, WHO established the WHO Civil Society Taskforce on TB two years ago, following the highly successful Global Ministerial Conference on Ending TB in Moscow. When we listen to the voices of people and communities affected by TB, we are reminded that ending TB is not just about ensuring access to health services. It's also about defending human rights. As you know, TB is deeply rooted in populations where human rights and dignity are threatened. While anyone can fall ill with TB, the disease takes the heaviest toll on the most vulnerable. That is why efforts to end TB must go hand-in-hand with other efforts to reduce inequalities, eliminate extreme poverty, ensure social protection and achieve universal health coverage.

COVID-19 has taken so much from us. But nothing can take away our shared vision to end TB.

Together, we will make that vision a reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus'.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General
World Health Organization

Foreword



This year, we are at the half-way mark for efforts to reach the 2022 targets committed to by Heads of State at the historic United Nations (UN) high-level meeting on tuberculosis (TB) in 2018. The 2020 World Health Organization (WHO) global TB report showcases the progress made towards ending

the TB epidemic, and puts in stark perspective the current and potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, in eroding the hard-won gains of recent years.

TB remains the world's most deadly infectious disease; it claims more than a million lives each year and affects millions more, with enormous impacts on families and communities. The report highlights the fact that TB incidence and deaths are falling, but not fast enough to reach global TB targets.

Globally, the annual number of people reported to have accessed TB treatment has grown from about 6 million in 2015, to 7 million in 2018 and 7.1 million in 2019. Access to TB preventive treatment has also increased, from 1 million in 2015, to 2.2 million in 2018 and 4.1 million in 2019. There is an urgent need to bolster these increases, to reach the 2022 targets on quality care and preventive treatment that were set in the political declaration of the UN high-level meeting. The political declaration targets are aligned with those of WHO's End TB Strategy and the WHO Director-General's flagship initiative 'Find. Treat. All. #EndTB', which is being implemented in collaboration with the Stop TB Partnership and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. We need to close gaps and reach the 2.9 million people with TB who are still not accessing quality care, including those with drug-resistant TB. We also need to intensify prevention efforts, and address funding gaps that impede progress in the TB response and in research.

The good news is that the WHO European Region is on track to reach the 2020 milestones of the End TB Strategy, and the African Region is making good progress towards these milestones.

Putting the spotlight on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on TB, this report includes data collected by WHO's Global TB Programme that show sharp drops in TB case notifications in several high TB burden countries

in 2020. WHO modelling and analysis of the pandemic's impact on TB mortality indicate that a 50% drop in the detection of TB cases over 3 months will lead to almost 400 000 more people dying from TB. We need to work together and do our best to save these lives.

The report includes an assessment of universal health coverage (UHC), social determinants and multisectoral action. TB impedes development; at the same time, poverty, vulnerability and other social factors fuel TB. Success depends on action across sectors; thus, it is crucial to implement WHO's multisectoral accountability framework on TB. In 2019 and 2020, WHO worked with high TB burden countries to develop or strengthen accountability mechanisms. Examples include joint reviews of national TB programmes with independent and civil society representatives, as well as support for high-level collaboration and review mechanisms, broad stakeholder forums, and head-of-state or government initiatives. In addition, WHO has worked with high TB burden countries to strengthen the engagement of civil society and youth, to galvanize the TB response.

All these efforts are being led under the umbrella of UHC and WHO's General Programme of Work, to ensure that no one is left behind.

This year's WHO global TB report comes in tandem with the UN Secretary-General's 2020 progress report on TB; the latter was prepared with support from WHO, as requested in the UN political declaration on TB. The overarching message of both reports is clear. High-level commitments have galvanized global, regional and national progress towards ending TB, but we need urgent and more ambitious investments and actions to put the world on track to reach the targets, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We need to stand in solidarity. Any slackening of commitment and action will impede efforts to save millions of lives. I believe that, together, we can and will make a difference. It's time for action. It's time to End TB.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'T. Kasaeva'.

Dr Tereza Kasaeva

Director, WHO Global TB Programme
World Health Organization

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