

▪ *State-of-the-Art*



Thursday, 20 March 2025

News Release: WHO calls for urgent action to address worldwide disruptions in tuberculosis services putting millions of lives at risk

20 March 2025: Geneva- On the occasion of World Tuberculosis (TB) Day, marked on 24 March, the World Health Organization (WHO) is calling for an urgent investment of resources to protect and maintain tuberculosis (TB) care and support services for people in need across regions and countries. TB remains the world's deadliest infectious disease, responsible for over 1 million people annually bringing devastating impacts on families and communities.

Global efforts to combat TB have saved an estimated 79 million lives since 2000. However, the drastic and abrupt cuts in global health funding are happening now are threatening to reverse these gains. Rising drug resistance, especially across Europe and the ongoing conflicts across the Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe, are further exacerbating the situation for the most vulnerable.

Under the theme ***Yes! We Can End TB: Commit, Invest, Deliver***, World Tuberculosis Day 2025 campaign highlights a rallying cry for urgency, accountability and hope. *"The huge gains the world has made against TB over the past 20 years are now at risk as cuts to funding start to disrupt access to services for prevention, screening, and treatment for people with TB,"* said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. *"But we cannot give up on the concrete commitments that world leaders made at the UN General Assembly just 18 months ago to accelerate work to end TB. WHO is committed to working with all donors, partners and affected countries to mitigate the impact of funding cuts and find innovative solutions."*

Funding: threat to global TB efforts

Early reports to WHO reveal that severe disruptions in the TB response are seen across several of the highest-burden countries following the funding cuts. Countries in the WHO African Region are experiencing the greatest impact, followed by countries in the WHO South-East Asian and Western Pacific Regions. Twenty-seven countries are facing crippling breakdowns in their TB response, with devastating consequences, such as:

- Human resource shortages undermining service delivery.
- Diagnostic services severely disrupted, delaying detection and treatment.
- Data and surveillance systems collapsing, compromising disease tracking and management.
- Community engagement efforts, including active case finding, screening, and contact tracing, deteriorating, leading to delayed diagnoses and increased transmission risks.

Nine countries report failing TB drug procurement and supply chains, jeopardizing treatment continuity and patient outcomes.

The 2025 funding cuts further exacerbate an already existing underfunding for global TB response. In 2023, only 26% of the US\$22 billion annually needed for TB prevention and care was available, leaving a massive shortfall. TB research is in crisis, receiving just one-fifth of the US\$5 billion annual target in 2022—severely delaying advancements in diagnostics, treatments, and vaccines. WHO is leading efforts to accelerate TB vaccine development through the TB Vaccine Accelerator Council, but progress remains at risk without urgent financial commitments.

Joint statement with civil society

In response to the urgent challenges threatening TB services worldwide, WHO's Director-General and Civil Society Task Force on Tuberculosis have issued a decisive statement. The joint statement released this week, demands immediate, coordinated efforts from governments, global health leaders, donors, and policymakers to prevent further disruptions. The statement outlines five critical priorities:

- *Addressing TB service disruptions* urgently, ensuring responses match the crisis's scale;
- *Securing sustainable domestic funding*, guaranteeing uninterrupted and equitable access to TB prevention and care;
- *Safeguarding essential TB services*, including access to life-saving drugs, diagnostics, treatment and social protections, alongside cross-sector collaboration;
- *Establishing or revitalizing national collaboration platforms*, fostering alliances among civil society, NGOs, donors, and professional societies to tackle challenges;
- *Enhancing monitoring and early warning systems* to assess real-time impact and detect disruptions early.

“This urgent call is timely and underscores the necessity of swift, decisive action to sustain global TB progress and prevent setbacks that could cost lives,” said Dr Tereza Kasaeva, Director of WHO's Global Programme on TB and Lung Health.

“Investing in ending TB is not only a moral imperative but also an economic necessity—every dollar spent on prevention and treatment yields an estimated US\$43 in economic returns.”

New guidance on TB and lung health

As one of the solutions to combating growing resource constraints, WHO is driving the integration of **TB and lung health within primary healthcare as a sustainable solution**. New technical guidance released by WHO outlines critical actions across the care continuum, focusing on prevention, early detection of TB and comorbidities, optimized management at first contact and improved patient follow-up.

The guidance also promotes better use of existing health systems, addressing shared risk factors such as overcrowding, tobacco, undernutrition and environmental pollutants.

By tackling TB determinants alongside communicable and non-communicable diseases, lung conditions, and disabilities through a unified strategy, WHO aims to reinforce the global response and drive lasting improvements in health outcomes.

On World TB Day, WHO calls on everyone: individuals, communities, societies, donors and governments, to do their part to end TB. Without concerted action from all stakeholders, the TB response will be decimated, reversing decades of progress, putting millions of lives at risk and threatening health security.

Related

<https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/information-sheet-integrated-approach-to-tb-and-lung-health>

[World TB Day campaign](#)

[Joint statement by WHO Director-General and Civil Society Task Force on Tuberculosis](#)

[WHO's work on tuberculosis](#)

Media contact:
press@eib.org
mediainquiries@who.int