

**Lifting Australia's Response to Tuberculosis**

**SUMMARY:** *Tuberculosis (TB) causes the deaths of around 2 million people each year globally, and it is the leading cause of early death amongst people with HIV in developing countries. Half of TB deaths and half of the high burden countries are in the Asia-Pacific. There has been considerable success in diagnosing and treating TB around the world, however overall resources need to approximately double to cut deaths significantly. Australia has been increasing its bilateral support for TB programs and also its contributions to the Global Fund, however it is still well behind many comparable donors and the level of need. This month we are going to ask our MPs to double aid to the Global Fund to \$100 million in the 2010-11 budget and to ensure that TB programs are also given greater bilateral funding.*

**TUBERCULOSIS – THE UNFINISHED AGENDA**

Tuberculosis (TB) is, in most cases, a curable disease and over the last twenty years there have been considerable successes in diagnosing and treating TB. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria has been the major source of TB aid funds in recent years, providing approximately 70% of all aid resources targeting TB.

However around 2 million people die globally from the disease each year. This has been exacerbated by the development of some drug resistant strains of the disease and the fact that people who are HIV-positive are particularly susceptible to TB.

Most importantly, despite increases in treatment coverage and effectiveness, so far aid and domestic resources applied to TB diagnosis and treatment have been insufficient. Each untreated person with TB is likely to infect another 10 - 15 people each year, making it imperative that there is early diagnosis and treatment in all countries.

The Asia- Pacific is home to around half of all the TB deaths each year and contains half of the twenty-two high burden countries. The table below lists the countries in the region with the highest number of deaths from TB.

**High burden TB countries in the Asia-Pacific**

	Approximate number of TB deaths in 2007
Afghanistan	8,000
Bangladesh	71,000
Cambodia	13,000
China	201,000
India	331,000
Indonesia	91,000
Myanmar	63,000
Pakistan	48,000
Philippines	36,000
Thailand	14,000
Vietnam	21,000

Source: WHO Global Tuberculosis Control Report 2009

In recent years Australia has increased its support for the Global Fund, has funded specific TB programs especially in the Pacific and has also funded the innovative \$75 million debt swap with Indonesia which will provide \$37.5 million to support TB programs.

Despite these increases Australia needs to do more to match the contributions of comparable countries and to meet our fair share of the level of aid required. The table below compares Australia's per capita pledge to the Global Fund in 2009 with that of other comparable donor countries.

Comparable countries	2009 pledge A\$ per person
Norway	11.89
Sweden	8.09
France	6.15
Denmark	4.78
Netherlands	4.42
Spain	4.17
Canada	3.70
Germany	2.98
Italy	2.92
United States	2.91
United Kingdom	2.77
Japan	1.36
Australia	1.34

Source: GFATM Pledges and Contributions Table accessed January 24, 2010  
Based on US to AUD exchange rate of 90c

As a first step Australia should increase its support for the Global Fund from around \$45 million to \$100 million in the 2010-11 aid budget. This would lift our per capita support to the Fund in line with that of the UK and US in 2009. Over the next three years our support for the Global Fund should increase to Australia's fair share of the total funding required – this would be around \$200 million per year.

### **ACTION:**

Write a letter to your member of the House of Representatives or a Senator in your State. Ask them to write on our behalf to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Stephen Smith MP requesting an increase in aid to the Global Fund to \$100 million in the 2010-11 Federal Budget and a greater focus on tuberculosis in bilateral aid funding.

You might like to note some of the following:

- around two million people die each year of TB
- half of these deaths occur within the Asia-Pacific Region
- each untreated person with TB is likely to infect 10-15 others each year, yet very effective treatment is available
- that Australia has increased its funding for TB programs and for the Global Fund but contributes less than many comparable countries.

### **For more information on the Global Fund:**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Global\\_Fund\\_to\\_Fight\\_AIDS,\\_Tuberculosis\\_and\\_Malaria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Global_Fund_to_Fight_AIDS,_Tuberculosis_and_Malaria)