

Australia joins the historic global meeting on TB

Sydney, Australia (Sept. 28) – This week world leaders made history at the first-ever United Nations High-Level meeting on Tuberculosis on 26 Sept in New York, by approving the [Political Declaration](#) that not only acknowledges the problem of tuberculosis but also united the world leaders to take urgent actions to address the problem. This is a major win for the affected communities and advocates around the world.

This meeting is significant for Australia because TB continues to remain a threat to our health security with high TB incidence and increasing Drug Resistance TB in our neighbourhood. “TB is undermining our efforts to lift people out of poverty and increase economic prosperity” stated, Senator the Hon Marise Payne, Minister for Foreign Affairs in her statement at the meeting.

The [Political Declaration](#) provides a framework for effectively responding to the epidemic and measuring progress toward ending the disease by 2030 in keeping with Sustainable Development Goal 3. It commits to reach 40 million people with treatment by 2022; accelerate the development of tools that are accessible and affordable; scale up global funding to US\$13 billion per year for TB programs and \$2 billion for research and development (R&D) annually; and promote access to affordable medicines, reaffirming the [World Trade Organization’s](#) “trade-related aspects of intellectual property agreement,” or [TRIPS](#), which allows countries to implement policies that place public health above patents.

RESULTS Australia welcomes and supports the declaration. As a member of the [ACTION Partnership](#), we have [joined 127 members of affected communities](#) and civil society, calling on governments to flesh out that framework with additional specific commitments and pledging to play a strong role in the next phase of the fight against TB.

“While political leaders stepped up in New York and we begin to talk about the next phase and steps forward, it is important to acknowledge the role the Australian TB Caucus, our volunteers and members of civil society have played in getting us to this point. **While TB has in the past been largely ignored in the political landscape and across the media, our advocates have worked tirelessly for decades to get us to this point knowing you can’t end poverty without ending TB,**’ says Maree Nutt, CEO RESULTS Australia.

“The UNHLM on TB is a strong starting point in the global fight against TB. But, it’s only that – a starting point, **the declaration will remain a statement if it’s not translated to actions.** This is a culmination of all the hard work we have put in together from Moscow to New York and even beyond,” says Shiva Shrestha RESULTS, Global Health Campaigns Manager.

“For us in Australia it’s an opportunity to take the legacy of Australia’s support to the global fight against the TB epidemic to a new level. Minister Payne’s statement at the UNHLM is also an acknowledgement to the work of Australian TB Caucus in raising the profile of TB over many years” added Nutt.

“For decades, TB has been on the top of the list of infectious disease because it was stuck at the bottom of the list of political priorities. We hope this has changed and that the UNHLM on TB is the beginning of the end of tuberculosis through ensuring that the declaration becomes a reality,” says Shrestha.

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