

Shaping the future of TB control



WHO Member States at the 58th World Health Assembly have endorsed a resolution supporting sustainable financing for tuberculosis prevention and control. WHO's Stop TB Director, Dr Mario Raviglione, explains how the resolution will shape the future of TB control...

- :: WHA58.14 resolution (English) [pdf 14kb]:
http://www.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA58/WHA58_14-en.pdf
- :: WHA58.14 resolution (français) [pdf 97.5kb]:
http://www.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA58/WHA58_14-fr.pdf

Please note that all World Health Assembly (WHA58) documents can be accessed in the six official languages, Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish from the following web page:

:: http://www.who.int/gb/e/e_wha58.html

Question - Will the new resolution on sustainable financing for TB prevention and control have an impact on reducing deaths?

Dr Mario Raviglione - Sustainable financing is a key theme underpinning progress towards the Millennium Development Goals TB targets for 2015. If Member States and WHO carry out the actions proposed in the resolution, the chances are high of reaching the 2015 targets. This would represent an enormous step towards the long-term goal of eliminating TB as a global public health problem by 2050.

Q - What are the main points of the resolution?

MR - There are four areas - strengthening and supporting mechanisms to ensure sustainable financing; the need to deliver successful quality DOTS through health system strengthening; improving TB control in relation to the challenges posed by HIV and drug resistance; and mobilizing societies against TB.

Q - What's been the driving force behind the TB resolution?

MR - The development of this resolution was initiated at the request of a Member State concerned that without long-term planning and clearly identified finances there is a barrier to TB control. TB control requires a sustained effort over many years, coordinated among a wide range of partners working together effectively. The resolution endorses the long-term 2006-2015 Global Plan, due to be launched later this year, which will support the needs of countries.

Q - What impact will the resolution have on Member States?

MR - Essentially, it means TB must be given a higher health priority, but more specifically it calls on Member States to:

1. Estimate resources required and available, and identify funding gaps in the medium-term
2. Ensure there are sufficient domestic and external resources to achieve the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

3. Set up national Stop TB partnerships to support long term plans for DOTS Expansion
4. Ensure all patients have access to the universal standard of care consistent with the DOTS strategy
5. Mobilize societies against TB
6. Set up collaboration between TB and HIV programmes
7. Integrate TB control in the mainstream of development plans

Q - The resolution welcomes the progress made in global TB control. How is this being achieved?

MR - During the World Health Assembly many delegates recognized the WHO Stop TB Department and the Stop TB Partnership's strong leadership in fighting the disease. This has been achieved through a pioneering approach which began over a decade ago based on full consensus on the DOTS strategy to combat TB, a single Global Plan to Stop TB coordinated among different partners in each country, and a global monitoring and evaluation system which enables WHO to annually report on country and global progress. This is what the HIV community refers to as the '3 ones'.

Q - How will strengthened health systems, as identified in the resolution, affect TB control programmes?

MR - At the same time that investments in strengthening general health systems can improve the performance of TB programmes, investments in TB programmes can strengthen the general health system, for example, through improvements in staff capacity, monitoring and evaluation systems, and laboratories.

Q - How will this resolution affect the work of the WHO Stop TB Department?

MR - Seven recommendations were put to the Director-General.

- Intensify support to countries to accelerate progress towards 2005 targets and 2015 MDGs
- Strengthen cooperation with countries to improve collaboration between HIV and TB programmes
- Strengthen strategies for control and care of drug-resistant TB
- With partners, devise, strengthen and support mechanisms for sustainable financing
- Enhance WHO's support to the Stop TB Partnership
- Recommend that tuberculosis be specifically named in Goal 6 and Target 8 of the MDGs
- Promote research and development for new TB control tools

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