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**WHO**

**Executive Board  
120<sup>th</sup> Session**

**Geneva, 22-30 January 2007**

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**STATEMENT BY PORTUGAL**

**- PROFESSOR J. PEREIRA MIGUEL  
DIRECTOR**

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH, LISBON -**

**ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Item 4.3 of the agenda  
"Tuberculosis control: progress and long-term planning"**

**Geneva, 23 January 2007**

*Check against delivery*

**120<sup>th</sup> Session of the WHO-Executive Board, Geneva, 22-30 January 2007**

**EU Statement on Agenda Item 4.3  
"Tuberculosis control: progress and long-term planning"**

Mr President,

On behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member states I have the honour to deliver the following statement in the name of the German EU Presidency.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia\* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

The EU highly acknowledges the achievements of WHO in the field of tuberculosis control and its support to the Stop TB Partnership. The results prove the gain in efficiency by building up networks and partnerships. Continued collaboration with all stakeholders will be essential in paying special attention to regional surveillance systems and WHO Regional Offices.

The EU is concerned about the dramatic increase of tuberculosis infection rates in the last year in Eastern Europe and in Africa where tuberculosis is mainly associated with HIV/AIDS. Another concern is the extreme drug resistance we face with TB. The development of extensively multi-resistant strains of tuberculosis in many countries with practically no chance of treatment outcome is alarming. To fight this potentially very dangerous development, the affected countries should consider XDR as one of their highest priority health problems, and assistance from WHO and the international community should be strengthened. Also the EU has to address health and TB in its development and neighbourhood policies instruments. However, this is always subject to dialogues with our partners.

The EU recognizes the need to enhance collaboration with other programmes, including especially those on HIV/AIDS and to strengthen alignment with the national health sectors in order to achieve greater global effectiveness of the international response to tuberculosis.

The EU highlights the high importance of assistance towards strengthening of pro-poor and equitable national health systems, including solutions to the human resource crisis, as a prerequisite. Concerning the access to drugs, the EU welcomes the contribution to the mobilization of resources for development by voluntary innovative financing initiatives taken by groups of Member states and in this regard note the International

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\* *Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

Drug Purchasing Facility – UNITAID, the International Finance Facility for Immunization, and the commitment to launch a pilot project within the Advance Market Commitments initiatives within 2007. It also acknowledges the key role of WHO and the Stop TB Partnership with their Green Light Committee and Global Drug Facility supporting TB drug access and safe use.

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The EU supports the adoption of the draft resolution with modifications in Pts. 1.(1) b and 2. (1); e.g.

**1. (1) b**

After

"limiting the emergence and transmission of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis, including extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis by ensuring high-quality performance of tuberculosis programmes"

add

*" , and, if affected, consider extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis as top priority health problem to be tackled immediately as part of the overall strategy of Stop TB."*

**2. (1)**

After

"...to achieve the international targets for 2015"

add

*"and urgently to strengthen WHO's assistance to countries affected by extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis".*

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Mr President, Excellencies, Members of the Executive Board, I thank you for your attention.

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