



24 March 2015 - As countries mark [World Tuberculosis Day](#) □ March 24 the [World Health Organization](#) is calling for global solidarity and action to support a new 20-year strategy which aims to end the global tuberculosis epidemic. The strategy sets ambitious targets of a 95% reduction in TB deaths and a 90% reduction in cases of TB by 2035.

An important milestone to be reached within the next five years (2020) is the elimination of catastrophic costs for TB patients and their families. This involves making care more accessible and providing financial protection schemes to minimize medical and non-medical costs as well as income loss.

The world is on track

Recent years have seen tremendous progress in the fight against TB. Between 2000 and 2013, an estimated 37 million lives were saved through TB diagnosis and treatment. The world is on

track to meet the Millennium Development Goal of reversing the spread of TB by 2015.

But this is not enough. In 2013, 9 million people fell ill with TB and 1.5 million died, despite Tuberculosis being curable and preventable.

TB second only to HIV/AIDS as greatest killer worldwide

Over 95% of cases and deaths are in developing countries, but TB occurs in every part of the world.

It is caused by bacteria (*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*) that most often affect the lungs. TB is spread from person to person through the air.

About one-third of the world's population has latent, non-infectious TB. Persons with compromised immune systems, such as people living with HIV, malnutrition or diabetes, or people who use tobacco, have a much higher risk of falling ill.

Global solidarity

This is a matter of social justice, fundamental to our goal of universal health coverage. Each and every man, woman or child with TB should have equal, unhindered access to the innovative tools and services they need for rapid diagnosis, treatment and care," says Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General.

"The progress that has been made in combating TB has been hard won and must be intensified if we are to wipe out the TB epidemic," says Dr Eric Goosby, UN Special Envoy on TB.

"The End TB Strategy offers new hope to the millions of people suffering and losing their lives to

TB each year. It is time to join forces to create a world free of TB.”

Read more about WHO’s TB strategy [here](#)

[10 facts about TB](#)