

For immediate release
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Global efforts to fight TB undermined as Replenishment Conference draws to a close

Civil society and individuals involved in the battle against tuberculosis (TB) are poised for disappointment today as they await the outcome of the Replenishment Conference of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Global Fund provides over two-thirds of the resources for TB control efforts in the countries worst affected by the epidemic.

In Berlin today, around 30 donors are expected to come together to pledge up to US\$ 10 billion to the fight against the three diseases between 2008 and 2010. This falls far short of the target agreed by the Board of the Global Fund – and endorsed by the G8 in Heiligendamm earlier this year – to triple the size of the Global Fund to US\$ 18 billion over the same three-year period.

Meeting the US\$ 18 billion target would have required donors to at least triple their contributions to the Fund. However many major donors, notably the UK, have reneged on their previous commitments to address the three diseases by only pledging small increases. The Secretary of State for International Development, Douglas Alexander's announcement on Tuesday to commit £360 million to the Fund between 2008 and 2010 was just half what campaigners had hoped for.

Advocacy organisation RESULTS UK, which had been campaigning for the UK to pledge at least £700 million over three years, believes that the UK government has failed to seize upon this unique opportunity to make a real difference in the fight against TB.

Sheila Davie, Executive Director of RESULTS UK says, "*Whilst Gordon Brown and his government may profess to leading the world in action against TB and other infectious diseases it has become abundantly clear that their commitment is less than whole-hearted.*"

"Since the Global Fund was established back in 2002, it has enabled more than 2.8 million people to receive life-saving treatment for TB. The UK has always recognised the importance of the Global Fund as the primary source of financing for TB control efforts. It is therefore a huge disappointment that they have decided to short-change the Fund with such a low pledge."

The UK and other donors will have further opportunities to top-up their pledges to the Global Fund but RESULTS UK urges them not to delay too much longer.

"For too long, the international community has been slow to respond to AIDS, TB and malaria. As a result, more than six million people die from these three diseases each year and more deadly, drug-resistant forms of TB are developing at an alarming rate.

"The Global Fund needs US\$ 18 billion over the next three years if there is going to be any hope of reversing the burden of AIDS, TB and malaria and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Further delays in meeting this funding need will have severe implications for millions of the world's most deprived people who depend on the Global Fund for treatment and care."

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