

11.5 - Ending Tuberculosis

The People's Health Movement welcomes the report on Ending Tuberculosis under WHA73 item 11.5

The report is clear that we are far from reaching the targets of the End TB strategy. COVID-19 has only set back progress that was already insufficient.

TB is a systematically neglected disease because it impacts people living in poverty. A pharmaceutical industry incentivised by profits neglects investing in TB research. Fundamental reform of the pharmaceutical system is required to meet the End TB targets.

PHM welcomes the references to open patents in the global strategy for TB research and innovation, and the acknowledgement of:

- the failure of the patent system to incentivize innovation
- the high price of TB medicines due to lack of competition
- the patenting of specific medicines as a barrier to operational research

We welcome de-linkage measures, such as milestone prizes and separating price from volume of sales. We urge MS to implement such strategies in full. However, whilst we welcome the strategy's call for public investment into TB research, we urge MS to ensure that public funding comes with public interest conditions attached. These conditions should include requirements such as the sharing of intellectual property, access and affordability clauses, technology transfer requirements and full transparency of R&D costs.

When new effective medications are developed, they must be able to reach everyone who needs them. Sub-optimal TB treatments create a huge burden of disability, which pushes patients deeper into poverty. The poorest patients cannot afford the consequences of using substandard treatments. We therefore urge MS to promote the full use of TRIPS flexibilities and the Doha Declaration to promote equitable access to new effective treatment globally.

Finally, we urge MS to consider the social determinants of TB and address housing, prisons, nutrition, air pollution, health systems, and inequality.