



Department
for International
Development



Rt Hon Alistair Burt MP
Minister of State

UK Academics and Professionals to End TB
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Our ref

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Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your letter of 1 August to the Prime Minister about the UNGA High-Level Meeting on TB. I am replying as the minister with responsibility for the issues raised.

I would like to congratulate you on forming Academics and Professionals to End TB, which is a great initiative that brings together such an extensive group of experts. I am pleased to see the UK academic sector playing such a key role in the global fight against TB. I know many of you also work closely with DFID and very much appreciate that engagement.

The UK Government is committed to helping to achieve the ambitious targets of the World Health Organisation's End TB. The recent House of Commons debate on TB also provided a welcome endorsement of the need to tackle TB.

DFID has a strong record in investing in global efforts to combat TB. We are the second largest donor to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, through which we are supporting 800,000 people suffering with TB under its fifth replenishment between 2017 and 2019. We are also the second largest donor to Unitaid, which aims to triple access to rapid testing for drug resistant TB and to reduce prices for drugs to treat TB and drug resistant TB.

In addition, as you know, we are also a major investor in research, both in new drugs and diagnostics, as well as research to ensure there is improved access to care. We are also working to strengthen health systems in many low income countries, which will help to advance TB control.

I agree with you on the importance of the UN High-Level Meeting on TB and would like to thank members of your group for their contributions to the interactive civil society hearing in June. The meeting will be crucial in galvanising the international community to show its commitment to fighting TB.

We have therefore been engaging with other partners to help shape the High-Level meeting and the TB policy agenda beyond. In particular we want to see a step-up in diagnosis and treatment to meet the goals of the End TB Strategy, particularly in low-income countries. We are also seeking increased capacity, coordination and funding for research, and strengthening of TB programmes to address AMR. We are working with other partners to gain support for these ambitious commitments and to develop a way of holding people to account for delivering on these.

I appreciate your request for the Prime Minister to attend the High-Level Meeting and I am being kept up to date with the preparations for the meeting. We cannot at this stage make any commitments about attendance at specific events, but I can confirm that the UK is exploring how best to engage in the High Level Meeting on TB.

I hope that this reply helps to reassure you that the UK Government shares your commitment to tackle TB.

Warm regards

Alistair Burt

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