

TUBERCULOSIS AFFECTED COMMUNITIES & CIVIL SOCIETY EXPRESS PROFOUND CONCERN AT THE ZERO DRAFT OF THE POLITICAL DECLARATION FOR THE #2023TBHLM

We, tuberculosis affected communities and civil society organizations, express our profound concerns and deep reservations regarding the Zero Draft of the Political Declaration for the forthcoming United Nations High Level Meeting on Tuberculosis (UNHLM on TB). Despite the immense toll tuberculosis continues to exact on communities around the world and the recent multi-stakeholder hearing on TB where **priority key asks** for inclusion in the declaration **were shared loudly and clearly**, we find the current draft lacking in the ambition, urgency, and concrete commitments needed to drive progress in the fight against the disease .

There is consensus in our community that this draft zero document is very weak and falls short on most of our key asks, including on quantitative time-bound targets, language on human rights and communities, strong financing and R&D targets, and language on accountability and implementation.

The Zero Draft, which we feel starts from a below zero starting point in comparison to the 2018 political declaration, fails to adequately address key issues critical to ending TB by 2023. We need a bolder and more comprehensive declaration that would address the persistent challenges faced by those affected by TB, including timely access to affordable and quality diagnostics, medicines, and treatment, as well as the urgent need for increased funding to support effective national TB responses, community lead interventions, and research and development of new tools and interventions.

Furthermore, the draft lacks a clear timebound roadmap for accelerating progress towards the global TB targets and achieving the commitments outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It is also blind in recognizing the disproportionate impact of TB on vulnerable populations, such as adolescents, migrants, refugees, people who use drugs, prisoners, and other marginalized communities.

We, as representatives of tuberculosis affected communities and civil society, call upon all member states and all stakeholders involved in shaping the Political Declaration to intensify their efforts and make substantial revisions to address these critical shortcomings. The UNHLM on TB presents a unique opportunity to galvanize global action and commitment towards ending the tuberculosis epidemic, and we cannot afford to let this chance slip away. The Key Essentials for an impactful High-Level Meeting Political Declaration on Tuberculosis **articulated in this document** must be reflected in future iterations of the UNHLM on TB outcome document.

We urge governments, policymakers, and all stakeholders to engage in a meaningful and inclusive dialogue with affected communities and civil society organizations to ensure that their voices are heard and their experiences inform the final declaration. We emphasize the need for ambitious targets, increased funding, robust accountability mechanisms, and a human rights-based approach that leaves no one behind in the fight against TB.

Together, let us work towards a Political Declaration that truly reflects the urgency and ambition required to end the needless suffering caused by tuberculosis and create a healthier and more equitable world for all.