



Final report

Paris, December 2003

34th UNION World Conference on Lung Health *sets patient at centre of tuberculosis control*

The 34th World Conference on Lung Health, organised by the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (UNION), closed in Paris on the 2nd November on a note of renewed commitment and strengthened partnerships to combat the global tuberculosis epidemic.

Globalisation: Opportunity for health?

was the theme this year and almost 16000 delegates from 120 countries attended the annual event to listen to international experts speak on the recent SARS epidemic, the increasing burden of the human immunodeficiency virus (VIH) in tuberculosis control, the role of nutrition in lung health and the importance of funding mechanisms, such as the Global Drug Facility (GDF) and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) in sustaining global efforts to combat diseases.

Putting patients on the agenda

This year's scientific programme, composed of 7 post-graduate courses, 4 workshops, 31 symposia, 37 poster sessions and 4 plenary sessions, provided a long-awaited and welcome mixture of scientific innovation and community participation in lung-health care and management. For the first time, patients mingled with doctors and scientists; they had been invited to chair and speak at symposia that dealt with patient empowerment in tuberculosis and other lung disease control. To strong applause, Winstone Zulu, an HIV activist from Zambia, who was treated for tuberculosis in 1997, stressed the human aspects. "Tuberculosis must come out of the laboratories" he said during the Opening Ceremony on Thursday night. "Tuberculosis is about people, it is about social mobilisation". Delivering anti-retrovirals (ARVs) is still a distant dream for many people infected with HIV in Africa but having a cure for TB gives hope. "The cure is only US \$ 10," he said, "so go and get diagnosed. If you have TB, you will only need to take your medicine for 6 or 8 months. That will save your life. When you have AIDS, you are sick all your life."

The UNION invests in HIV

HIV was more prominent on the agenda this year. At the Friday morning press conference with Michel Kazatchkine, the UNION announced its US \$ 3 million funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to invest in HIV.

"Given the inextricable link between TB and HIV, each fuelling the other, we will now be able to apply the TB DOTS model to HIV so that we can be part of the effort to scale up the use of ARVs in the context of general health services", announced Dr Paula Fujiwara, head of the new HIV department at the UNION.

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The Opening Ceremony and Special Guest Lecture on Thursday 30th October was an occasion for Professor Anne Fanning, President of the UNION, to salute the international efforts in tuberculosis control, led by the Stop TB Partnership. "I am impressed by the foresightedness of the founders of the UNION," she said. "In 1920, they recognised the need for strong leadership and collaboration in combating tuberculosis."

Dr Mario Raviglione, recently nominated Director of the World Health Organization's Stop TB Department, identified the challenges ahead. "We have 37% case detection rates, 83% cure rates and now the Millennium Development Goals to halve poverty by 2015. But this is not impossible," he concluded. "We have the tools and the same power that brought the SARS epidemic under control."

The DOTS strategy is still the best intervention for tuberculosis control

Dr Nils Billo in his welcoming speech drew attention to the DOTS strategy, originally developed by Dr Karel Styblo, late Director of Scientific Activities of the UNION and the subject of a new educational documentary on CD-ROM just released by the UNION. "The DOTS strategy is a very powerful tool," he said. "If we apply it properly, we should be able to do much more. We need to sustain our efforts in ensuring that our donors keep on supplying the funds, in strengthening our institutions and in supporting initiatives like the Global Drug Facility so that patients do not die of tuberculosis through lack of drug supplies."

The theme for the 35th World Conference on Lung Health in 2004 is the Millennium Development Goals

New year's annual meeting will be held at the Palais des Congrès, in Paris, from 28 October-1 November 2004. Poverty, child health, acute respiratory infections, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis will feature prominently on the programme.

For World Conference programme details, visit: www.iatld.org

For more information on the theme for 2004, contact: Paris2004@iatld.org

To illustrate your articles, consult the Stop TB Image Library <http://stoptb.lpipserver.com> or contact the manager: Imagelibrary@iatld.org

Further UNION information from the 34th World Conference

The winners of the 2003 Christmas Seals contest were:

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| 1st prize: | <i>Canadian Lung Association, Canada</i> |
| 2nd prize: | <i>Philippines Tuberculosis Society</i>
<i>Korean National Tuberculosis Association</i> |
| 3rd prize: | <i>Comite Nacional de Lucha Contra la Tuberculosis, Mexico</i> |

The 2003 UNION Awards went to:

- Dr Elizabeth Lucy Corbett for the Scientific Prize
- Dr Oumou Bah-Sow for the Public Health prize / Karel Styblo Prize



The Opening Ceremony was recorded on video. For more details, contact us at: communications@iatld.org

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