

The Union

International Union Against
Tuberculosis and Lung Disease

A HEALTHIER WORLD FOR ALL, FREE OF TUBERCULOSIS AND LUNG DISEASE



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Who we are

The Union is a global scientific, technical and membership organisation.

Our vision

A healthier world for all, free of tuberculosis and lung disease

Our mission

The Union strives to end suffering due to tuberculosis and lung diseases, old and new, by advancing better prevention and care.

We seek to achieve this by the generation, dissemination and implementation of knowledge into policy and practice.

We aim to ensure that no-one is left behind, people are treated equally and we have a focus on vulnerable and marginalised populations and communities.

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A century of leadership in lung health

On 20 October 1920, public health pioneers from 31 nations gathered to establish the International Union Against Tuberculosis.

Our founders' vision remains as relevant as ever. Today we are led by people committed to achieving this vision.

Our members are organisations and individuals from all parts of the world:

- Clinicians
- Policy makers
- Front-line workers and implementers
- Scientists
- Affected communities
- Advocates and civil society

Our vision for TB: A world free of TB

Since its inception in 1920, The Union has focused on tuberculosis (TB) and innovating TB care.

The Union has set out our 2022-2027 vision, objectives and strategy to end TB. This goal can only be achieved collectively, with all of our members, partners and TB community – everyone has a role to play.

Together, we can bring an end to TB.

To achieve this vision, The Union will aim to:

- End the spread of TB
- Prevent the development of TB
- Effective care and management of people with TB
- Address the special needs of children with TB and adults with TB-related disabilities, other illnesses and risks
- Prevent the airborne spread of TB in healthcare and other indoor settings
- Enhancing community engagement to prevent TB-affected families from facing catastrophic financial and social costs due to an episode of TB

Our vision for Lung Health

The Union 2020-2025 strategic plan for lung health priorities two key themes:

1. Lung health across the life course

This focuses on:

- Attention to the avoidable causes of lung disease
- Effective care for common, high-burden respiratory illness (including asthma, COPD, pneumonia, and viral respiratory infections, as well as TB)
- Access to cost-effective long-term interventions to mitigate the effects of longer-term respiratory illness

2. Health and well-being post TB

Understanding and mitigating the long-term adverse impact of TB, in terms of:

- Post-TB lung disease
- General health and well-being, including disability post TB
- Mental health and well-being post TB
- Socio-economic well-being post TB
- Stigma and discrimination post TB

Our vision for Safe Air: Protect human health from airborne threats

Air is vital to our existence, yet we take safe air for granted. In an era of climate change, pandemics, and urban growth, we must acknowledge the hazardous nature of unsafe air.

Air pollution is a major public health threat that causes a range of adverse health effects.

As with many global health problems, the danger is greater in low- and middle-income countries.

We need evidence-based interventions and policies that protect human health from airborne threats, promote environmental justice and sustain economic and social well-being across the global.

Without safe air we cannot hope to eradicate the airborne transmission of deadly infectious diseases, including COVID-19, tuberculosis and lung disease.

The Union is determined to drive discovery, innovation and implementation of safe air solutions.

This requires us to take a multidisciplinary and collaborative approach between physical chemistry, engineering, building and urban design, law, data science, psychology, social sciences and many others.

Our vision for Tobacco Control: Eliminate the use of tobacco

The Union's goal is to partner with low- and middle-income country governments and non-government organisations (NGOs) in tobacco control capacity building, policy making and implementation.

The Union aims to do this by advancing the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control – an international health treaty that provides a coordinated strategy to reduce tobacco use.

To achieve this vision, The Union will aim to:

- Support countries in achieving tobacco control sustainability
- Close tobacco control policy gaps with a focus on tax increase and tobacco cessation
- Strengthen enforcement and implementation of tobacco control policies
- Enhance country engagement in countering tobacco industry interference
- Provide policy support for countries on regulating new products
- Promote the integration of tobacco control with other public health and human rights strategies

Scientific leadership

For over 100 years, The Union has been made up of the world's leading lung health experts.

Members created and drive The Union forward

Union membership means being part of something bigger; a movement of like-minded individuals and organisations who work together to champion change for a better future in lung health.

Our membership is global, with 118 countries represented - 49% from low- and middle-income countries.

World class expertise

The Union prides itself on our knowledge of all aspects of lung health, at every level - from international tuberculosis research to national tobacco control policy development. Key focus areas are:

- Tuberculosis
- Lung health
- Tobacco control
- Operational research

The Union's experts are based across the globe, so we have a strong understanding of the local context we are working in.

Sharing expertise: Technical assistance

The Union offers technical assistance at the request of governments, agencies and other organisations. Our goal is to provide assistance that addresses both national priorities and international standards, policies and objectives.

The Union's focus is on working hand-in-hand, in partnership with the country. Union experts provide the support in developing and implementing the protocols and implementation planning required to meet the particular needs and priorities of each country.

This assistance is based on the real and practical experience of our work for decades at the forefront in the fight against tuberculosis, lung disease and tobacco use.

Knowledge dissemination and exchange

The Union facilitates global sharing of expertise and scientific knowledge in several ways:

Education is at our heart

We design educational programmes to reduce the burden of lung disease, better manage tuberculosis (TB) in low-resource settings, and implement tobacco control.

Dissemination is key to progress

Communicating knowledge clearly and effectively is vital to our mission. We do this through two well-established journals - the International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (IJTLD) and Public Health Action (PHA).

The Union World Conference on Lung Health

The foundation of The Union in 1920, was as a direct consequence of an international meeting dedicated to combatting the global TB pandemic.

Since that meeting, the Conference has become the crucial platform to announce scientific advances, share community-based trials and effective programmes, as well as, disseminate information, ideas and inspiration to meet the challenge of improving lung health.

While retaining a focus on eliminating TB, the Conference has expanded its scope to cover tobacco control, air pollution, COVID-19 and all aspects of lung health.

Research: Generating knowledge for better health

Our vision is to improve health outcomes for people in low- and middle-income countries through clinical, public health and operational research.

Our objective is to generate knowledge, build capacity and encourage evidence-based decision making to improve the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and monitoring of tuberculosis and lung disease.

To achieve this we will conduct, publish and use:

- Clinical trials
- Epidemiological, health systems and operational research
- Clinical and public health research methods

We will also:

- Support countries and institutions to conduct their own relevant research and clinical trials
- Foster sustainable leadership and funding for research and clinical trials, through research fellowships, networking and by maintaining and expanding strategic partnerships