



International Union Against
Tuberculosis and Lung Disease
Health solutions for the poor

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RIISING TOLL OF MULTIDRUG RESISTANT-TB PRESENTS GLOBAL CHALLENGE

Experts discuss the impact of MDR-TB in France, Europe and around the world at the 44th Union World Conference on Lung Health

30 October 2013/ Paris, France – At the 44th Union World Conference on Lung Health in Paris today, experts from The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Health, World Health Organization and the French National Reference Laboratory for TB will discuss the rising toll of multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) and what that means for individual countries and global health.

The press conference, entitled “The Challenge of MDR-TB – Globally, in Europe, and in France” is part of the Programme of the 44th Union World Conference on Lung Health, where delegates from 125 countries gather to address lung diseases and solutions.

MDR-TB

MDR-TB is a form of TB that is resistant to at least the medicines rifampicin (R) and isoniazid (H). This makes it more difficult and expensive to treat. Compared to six months for a typical TB case, it can take up to two years to treat MDR-TB and the treatment is 100 times more expensive. Proof of the efficacy of shorter treatment regimens would signal real progress in helping to reduce the time and cost of addressing some cases of MDR-TB and this topic is addressed in several sessions during the conference.

The WHO Global TB Report 2013, released in London last week, reports that 3.6 per cent of newly diagnosed and 20.2 per cent of retreatment cases of TB had MDR-TB. The report states that an estimated 450,000 people developed MDR-TB and 170,000 died from the disease in 2012. It also concludes that less than one-third of the people estimated to have MDR-TB were detected in 2012.

The highest levels of MDR-TB are found in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and treatment success rates for TB remain lowest in the European Region. The number of MDR-TB cases is increasing even in countries like France, where the overall burden of TB is static or decreasing.

These issues will be discussed in the press conference, being held today, Wednesday, 30 October 2013 from 12:45 to 13:45 in Room 242B at the Palais des Congrès. Speakers at the Press Conference include:

- **Dr Mario Raviglione**, Director, WHO Global TB Programme, speaking on “MDR-TB: The Global Overview”
- **Dr Masoud Dara**, TB and MDR-/XDR-TB Control Programme, WHO Europe, revealing “The Situation in Europe”
- **Dr Arnaud Trébucq**, Department of TB and HIV, The Union, sharing positive developments in the fight against TB with “Research on Short-Course Treatment Regimens for MDR-TB”
- **Prof Vincent Jarlier**, French National Reference Laboratory for TB, talks about the impact of MDR-TB in “The Situation in France”

After the press conference, MDR-TB continues to be highlighted across the conference programme, including:

- Chandra Kishore Mishra, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India will address whether MDR-/XDR-TB a real threat in India? in the Plenary Session on HIV and MDR-TB (Friday, 1 November 2013, 11:30 - 12:30, Amphithéâtre Bleu, Palais des Congrès). English-French-English simultaneous translation will be provided in this session.
- “MDR-TB in children and adolescent TB issues” will be discussed in a Symposium on Friday, 1 November 2013 (14:30 –16:30, Amphithéâtre Bleu, Palais des Congrès). English-French-English simultaneous translation will be provided in this session.
- In a Meet-the-Expert session on Sunday, 3 November (08:00–09:00, Room Maillot, Palais des Congrès), The Union’s Dr Arnaud Trébucq will reveal the initial findings of studies testing a 9-month treatment course for MDR-TB. Earlier pilot tests of this regimen demonstrated a 90 per cent success rate with no treatment failures or relapses.

“MDR-TB is a real and present threat to global health”, says José Luis Castro, Interim Executive Director of The Union. “It puts a greater burden on health systems and budgets, as well as the obvious harm it causes to MDR-TB patients and their families. Cases are found all over the world, irrespective of a country’s overall level of TB prevalence. We all have an urgent and vested interest in identifying MDR-TB and controlling its spread”.

Further details about the 44th Union World Conference on Lung Health are available at: <http://www.worldlunghealth.org/conf2013/>.

About the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union)

The mission of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) is to bring innovation, expertise, solutions and support to address health challenges in low- and middle-income populations. With nearly 15,000 members and subscribers from 150 countries, The Union has its headquarters in Paris and offices serving the Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, North America and South-East Asia regions. Its scientific departments focus on tuberculosis and HIV, lung health and non-communicable diseases, tobacco control and research. Learn more at www.theunion.org

About the 44th Union World Conference on Lung Health

Since the early 1920s, The Union has been convening international conferences to disseminate the latest research on tuberculosis and other related issues, such as HIV/AIDS, asthma, pneumonia, non-communicable diseases and tobacco control. Some 2,500 delegates from 125 countries attend the 5-day scientific programme. For complete details, go to www.worldlunghealth.org

HOW TO COVER THE CONFERENCE IN PERSON / USING ONLINE RESOURCES:

Complete details about the 44th Union World Conference on Lung Health may be found on the conference website at www.worldlunghealth.org. Download the conference programme at worldlunghealth.org/conf2013/images/1_Paris2013/Forms/Final_Prog_2013.pdf and the Abstract Book at <http://www.worldlunghealth.org/conf2013/index.php/programme/abstracts/abstract-book>

The inaugural session and plenary sessions will be available via streaming video at www.theunion.org. Daily news, photos and short videos will also be posted on this site during the conference.

Following the conference, webcasts of most sessions will be accessible from www.worldlunghealth.org

Press credentials permit working journalists to have access to all conference sessions except for closed meetings. Register in person at the Palais des Congrès beginning at 08:00 on Wednesday, 30 October (please bring a press card and/or 2-3 relevant published clips).

Journalists can follow the conference on Twitter: [@UnionConference](https://twitter.com/UnionConference) and Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheUnionLungHealth.

For more information, to arrange an interview with a speaker or to confirm your interest in attending, please RSVP to: Tracey Johnston at tjohnston@worldlungfoundation.org or Sabrina Beaubay at sbeaubay@worldlungfoundation.org