

Media Release

For Immediate Release

The 48th Union World Conference on Lung Health in Guadalajara, Mexico launched ahead of World TB Day

Mexican footballer Andrés Guardado announced as Conference Ambassador

Thursday, 16 March, 2017 (Guadalajara, Mexico) – [The 48th Union World Conference on Lung Health](#), to be held at the Expo Guadalajara Convention Centre in Guadalajara, Mexico, on 11-14 October this year, was today officially launched at the Palacio de Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco in Guadalajara ahead of World TB Day on 24 March.

Tuberculosis (TB) is the biggest infectious disease killer in the world. Latest figures from The World Health Organization estimate that in 2015 some 1.8 million people died of the disease. In the same year, TB surpassed HIV as the world's leading disease killer, despite the fact that TB is a disease that can be treated and cured.

Mexican footballer **Andrés Guardado**, whose [Foundation](#) works with underprivileged children in Guadalajara, has agreed to be the official ambassador of the conference.

The conference, which has as its theme 'Accelerating Toward Elimination', is organised by the [International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease](#), (The Union) and is the **most important annual meeting in its field**, attracting a strong national and international media presence.

Each event brings together some 4000 researchers, health programme directors, politicians, global advocates, civil society, health care professionals and other prominent figures to tackle issues related to TB and lung health (tobacco and air pollution) that affect, in particular, people living in poverty.

The 2017 conference will focus on accelerating progress on all areas of lung health, including the growing collision between noncommunicable diseases such as diabetes with infectious diseases such as TB.

Launching the conference today were Dr **Antonio Cruces Mada**, Secretary of Health of the State of Jalisco and **José Luis Castro**, Executive Director of The Union.

"The 48th Union World Conference on Lung Health comes at a pivotal time in global health," said **José Luis Castro**, Executive Director of The Union. "Ministers of Health from around the world will meet at the global ministerial forum in Moscow to explore how to accelerate progress

towards the target of ending the TB epidemic by 2030, as set out in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the WHO End TB Strategy. And in 2018, the United Nations will hold for the very first time a high-level meeting aimed at producing lasting government commitments that lead us to defeating the disease once and for all.”

Dr Antonio Cruces Mada, Secretary of Health of the State of Jalisco said, “The government of the State of Jalisco recognises that tackling issues around tobacco and air pollution present ongoing challenges that we must overcome to improve the quality of life for our citizens, so we are both delighted and appreciative that the 48th Union World Conference on Lung Health is being held in Guadalajara.

“The Union conference represents a unique opportunity for our local researchers and health professionals to engage with their international colleagues and, at the same time, a chance for Jalisco to showcase some of the outstanding work being undertaken by our own medical and research communities.”

“The Andrés Guardado Foundation is all about giving young children who live in poverty an opportunity to develop as young adults, reintegrating them back into their families and motivating them through football, so I am thrilled to be the official Ambassador for an event like the 48th Union World Conference on Lung Health that helps us all to understand and find solutions to lung health issues especially affecting marginalised communities,” said **Andrés Guardado**. Watch Andrés Guardado’s video message here: <http://bit.ly/2naGbKb>

Mirta Molinari, Director of The Union’s Mexico Office and Coordinator of Tobacco Control in Latin America, said, “Mexico and Latin America are both places where passionate work is being carried out in the field of lung health, especially in TB and tobacco control. It is fantastic that the Union World Conference is in Guadalajara”.

The Union and the protection of lung health in Latin America

The 2017 Union World Conference on Lung Health in Mexico reflects The Union’s commitment to protecting lung health in Latin America, in the fight against both TB and tobacco use. Thanks to a grant from the **Bloomberg Philanthropies Initiative**, The Union offers the region technical, legal and financial assistance aimed at improving tobacco control policies. Its work focuses on those countries with the highest burden of tobacco use in the region: Mexico and Brazil.

In Mexico, 16.4% of the population 15 years or older (14.3 million people) are currently smokers (25% of men and 8% of women), according to Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2015. Tobacco use in Mexico claims 46,400 lives each year.

“Mexico does not yet have a comprehensive national smoke-free law which is essential if we are to effectively de-normalise smoking nationwide,” said **Mirta Molinari**.

Jesús Felipe González, General Director of the National Centre of Preventive Programmes and Disease Control at the Mexican Federal Ministry of Health, and member of The Union’s Board of Directors, said, “The 48th Union World Conference on Lung Health will showcase the progress being made on defeating TB across Mexico. Mexico records over twenty thousand new cases of TB every year.

“Within Latin America and beyond, Mexico has been a leader in its response to respiratory diseases. New cases of TB have been falling annually for a decade now and we are making

considerable progress on tobacco control.”

Local Guadalajara resident, **Sandra Muñoz**, who was cured of TB in 2012, said she thought that launching the 48th Union World Conference on Lung Health to coincide with World TB Day next Friday 24 March would help promote awareness of the diseases in the community.

“We need to defeat a disease that kills too many people who could have been cured like myself but who just do not have access to testing and treatment, in many cases, simply because of a lack of information and economic resources” said Ms Muñoz.

With 4,000 participants from over 100 countries expected to attend the event later in the year, the 48th Union World Conference on Lung Health will deliver a strong economic impact to Guadalajara and region.

“It is our hope that the conference delegates discover and enjoy the many delights of Guadalajara and the State of Jalisco,” said **Gustavo Stauffert Buclon**, Chief Executive Officer of the Guadalajara Convention and Visitor’s Centre.

“We also believe that the Union World Conference’s strong media visibility together with its free public events taking place around the city of Guadalajara will also leave a significant social legacy.”

ENDS

Press contacts:

Michael Kessler (in Guadalajara)
Michael Kessler Media
Media Relations – The Union
Mobile: +52 55 4070 8475
Email: Michael.kessler@inton-media.com

Jo Waters (Europe)
Communications – The Union
Mobile: +44 (0) 7949 770 409
email: jwaters@theunion.org

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

For nearly 100 years, The Union has drawn from the best scientific evidence and the skills, expertise and reach of its staff, consultants and membership in order to advance solutions to the most pressing public health challenges affecting people living in poverty around the world. With nearly 17,000 members and subscribers from 156 countries, The Union has its headquarters in Paris and regional offices in Africa, the Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, North America and South-East Asia. The Union’s scientific departments focus on tuberculosis and HIV, lung health and non-communicable diseases, tobacco control and operational research. For more information, please visit www.theunion.org and <http://www.tobaccofreeunion.org>.

About the Andrés Guardado Foundation

The Andrés Guardado Foundation works with disadvantaged children and teenagers throughout Guadalajara, providing opportunities for development and learning as well as social integration, allowing vulnerable young people to realise their potential.

For more information, please visit: <https://andresguardado.org/>

View the video: <http://bit.ly/2ntAFj9>