



The Union



*Media release: For immediate release*

**Statement  
on  
World Health Organization funding**

**Wednesday, 15 April 2020 (Paris, France)** —The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) today expressed its indignation at the decision by US President Trump to announce the suspension of its funding of the World Health Organization (WHO).

**Professor Guy Marks**, President of The Union, said:

“Undermining the WHO at a time when it is courageously leading the global coordination of the COVID-19 response is appalling public health policy. Infectious respiratory diseases know no borders and now is not the time to hinder global collaboration. The main game at present is to save lives, not to put them at risk.

“De-funding the WHO will also be catastrophic for WHO’s other disease control programmes around the world. Let’s not forget that 4000 people were dying daily from tuberculosis even before the arrival of COVID-19, and more than eight million people die from tobacco related illnesses and some 41 million die of non-communicable diseases annually. Retracting support for the WHO at this critical moment will have global health consequences far beyond COVID-19.

“Now, more than ever, the world needs the United States government to be the leader it has shown itself to be over the past century. That requires collaboration with key partners like the WHO. We call on the US government to urgently reverse this reckless decision.”

ENDS

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

The Union was founded in 1920 and is the world’s first global health organisation. We are a global leader in ending TB, we fight the tobacco industry, and we solve key problems in treating major diseases. We use science to design the best treatments and policies for the most pressing public health challenges affecting people living in poverty around the world. The Union’s members, staff and consultants operate in more than 140 countries and embody our core values of accountability, independence, quality and solidarity. [Please read The Union’s latest resources, guidance and information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)

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