Advocacy Dialogue to End TB in Uganda
Kampala, September 13, 2018

The United Nations General Assembly has convened a United Nations High-Level Meeting (UN HLM) on Tuberculosis (TB) to secure commitment from heads of state and governments for a coordinated global response and increased resources to combat TB. The meeting, with the theme, *United to End Tuberculosis: An Urgent Global Response to a Global Epidemic*, will be held September 26, 2018, in New York City.

Uganda will be represented at the UN HLM meeting by the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs (representing His Excellency the President of Uganda), the Hon. Minister of Health, senior officials from the Ministry of Health (MOH), representatives from non-governmental organizations, and representatives from civil society organizations. The USAID Defeat TB project, implemented by University Research Co., LLC (URC), will also participate in the meeting.

**TB Advocacy Dialogue in Uganda**

Ahead of the first-ever UN HLM meeting on TB, the Uganda MOH and the National TB and Leprosy Program (NTLP), in collaboration with the USAID Defeat TB Project, organized a TB Advocacy Dialogue on September 13, 2018 targeting the country's Members of Parliament (MPs) as high-level policymakers to prioritize ending the TB epidemic in Uganda. The Dialogue included an orientation to raise awareness about TB amongst the MPs, discuss the implications of the shortfalls in TB funding in Uganda, and served as a call to action for the MPs. The meeting was followed by a visit to the Mulago National Referral Hospital TB ward where the MPs had a chance to meet with multi-drug resistant TB (MDR-TB) survivors, tour the MDR-TB ward, and understand the challenges and opportunities for improving MDR TB and TB services.

Participants in the Dialogue included 18 MPs from the Uganda Parliamentary TB Caucus, MOH officials, staff from Mulago National Referral Hospital, two URC Vice Presidents, USAID Defeat TB staff, as well as staff of TB implementing partners including the Uganda Stop TB Partnership, the Global Fund and the World Health Organization (WHO).

**Panel members at the press conference from the MOH, Parliament, NTLP, and WHO, discuss the TB burden in Uganda**

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The Advocacy Dialogue sought to:

- Orient and sensitize members of the Parliamentary TB Caucus on issues related to TB and MDR-TB in Uganda;
- Mobilize political commitment towards ending the TB epidemic in Uganda by increasing awareness of the TB burden in Uganda, understanding the challenges of managing drug-resistant-TB, and identifying key actions required to resolve these challenges;
- Advocate for increased resource allocation and national action towards managing the TB epidemic; and
- Obtain written commitment to specific actions from the TB Parliamentary Caucus.

Advocacy Dialogue Presentations

The Commissioner, National Disease Control in the MOH, representing the Director General of Health Services, made opening remarks, welcoming all participants; the WHO representative provided a summary of the UN HLM and implications for Uganda; the Acting Assistant Commissioner Health Services in charge of TB and Leprosy Control made a presentation on the TB burden in Uganda with a focus on MDR-TB, its challenges and programmatic management, and the implications for the country if the TB epidemic is not controlled; Dr. Abel Nkolo from the USAID Defeat TB Project discussed the project’s activities in identifying missed TB cases, where the TB cases are being found, and prevention and treatment successes to date. USAID Defeat TB introduced a call to action for “increased commitment of domestic resources to end TB.”

Following the presentations, a panel discussion and media press conference provided an opportunity for participants to ask questions and gain a better understanding of TB and its management in Uganda.

The Mulago National Referral Hospital Deputy Executive Director committed to carry out advocacy for TB by “putting TB in everyone’s face.” Her priorities for the Mulago TB ward are to develop a TB Centre of Excellence, ensure appropriate and safe transportation for TB patients (e.g., ambulances), and increase human resources for TB management at the hospital. Additionally, TB implementing partners committed to increased collaboration with the Ugandan MOH and all TB stakeholders to contribute to ending TB in Uganda.

Key Action Items

At the Dialogue, the MPs committed to:

- Increase their advocacy for TB in the parliament;
- Voice support to increase resource allocation for TB services during the appropriation and budgeting process; and
- Provide oversight of TB services in their communities.