



Chairperson, It is an honor for Zambia to address this assembly on the critical issue of tuberculosis (TB) and our collective progress in implementing the End TB Strategy. We align our statement made on behalf of the 47 member states on this topic.

The global TB epidemic remains a formidable challenge, and Zambia stands in solidarity with the global community in our shared commitment to end this scourge. We recognize the importance of the WHO's comprehensive framework for collaborative action on tuberculosis and comorbidities, and we commend the renewal of the Director-General's FIND.TREAT.ALL#ENDTB initiative for 2023–2028. This initiative is vital for strengthening global cooperation and scaling up access to comprehensive TB services.

Zambia appreciates the engagement of the WHO Civil Society Task Force on TB, which plays a crucial role in informing TB responses at all levels. We urge increased investment to support the effective engagement of communities and civil society, recognizing their essential role in driving TB elimination efforts.

The emphasis on integrated, patient-centered care and prevention is crucial. We acknowledge the progress made with the new six-month all-oral regimen for drug-resistant TB and the continued high coverage of HIV testing among TB patients. However, we must address the gap in coverage for antiretroviral therapy among HIV-positive TB patients, particularly in low-resource settings.

Zambia recognizes that many high-burden TB countries, including Zambia, face challenges with health service coverage. Strengthening multisectoral accountability mechanisms is essential, and we are committed to implementing these frameworks to address the drivers of the TB epidemic effectively. Further, accurate data on TB mortality and disease burden are essential for informed decision-making and resource allocation. We call for continued efforts to improve the quality and coverage of national vital registration systems.

The recent launch of the WHO research tracker and the tuberculosis vaccine accelerator council are commendable steps forward. However, we must address the critical funding gap for TB research and development. The Treatment Action Group reported TB research and development investment at US\$ 1 billion in 2021, far below the global target of US\$ 5 billion per year by 2027. Increased investment is imperative to accelerate the development of new TB tools, including vaccines, diagnostics, and treatments.

At this mid-point towards the Sustainable Development Goals, we acknowledge that global progress towards ending TB remains off target. However, with the commitments

made in the 2023 Political Declaration of the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Fight Against Tuberculosis, there is renewed hope. We urge all Member States to rapidly translate these commitments into concrete actions.

Zambia reaffirms its dedication to the End TB Strategy and calls upon the global community to support high-level country leadership, accelerate the development of better TB tools, and ensure full implementation of the 2023 Political Declaration. Together, we can end the TB epidemic and secure a healthier future for all.