

Union statement for media

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

Statement from The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) on Bedaquiline access, India

Paris, France, 19 January 2017 – Drug-resistant TB is one of the most terrible diseases that any person can ever face. Even when treatment is effective, it is long and very difficult. The health system must do everything in its power to provide access to effective treatments for every patient, with the appropriate treatment depending on the drug susceptibility profile involved in each case. It is essential that drug-sensitivity testing be performed at the outset, so that healthcare workers and patients know which medicines are likely to be effective in treatment and which will not be effective due to resistance. People living with drug-resistant TB should receive only those TB medicines that are likely to be effective in the case of that patient, and they must be treated with multiple medicines, at the same time, to which the TB is susceptible—a treatment approach known as “combination therapy”.

More people die from TB each year than from any other infectious disease. Yet most of the medicines available for treating TB are very old and do not work well. There has been very little research done into developing new medicines. One or two new medicines will not solve the crisis of drug-resistant TB. We need entirely new combinations of medicines—enough new medicines to create entirely new regimens capable of treating TB in one month or less.

“Weak investment in the research and development of new TB medicines and poor delivery of essential services—using rapid diagnostics and early testing for drug resistance followed by appropriate therapy—has led to the terrible situation that the patient and her family are now enduring. All efforts must now be made to provide effective treatment so that she can survive and recover,” said Dr. Riitta Dlodlo, Director of the Department of Tuberculosis and HIV, International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union).

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

Since its founding as a global scientific organisation in 1920, The Union has drawn from the best evidence and expertise to advance solutions to public health challenges affecting people living in poverty. The Union is currently progressing solutions for tuberculosis, HIV, tobacco-related diseases and other lung and non-communicable diseases. With close to 17,000 members active in more than 140 countries, The Union has its headquarters in Paris and 11 offices in Africa, the Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, North America and South-East Asia. www.theunion.org

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