Over 100 people joined the ‘Every Breath Counts’ walk, in solidarity against the toll of TB, as part of the Union Africa Region Conference.

The 20th Conference of The Union Africa Region was held in Accra, from 10-13 July. Attended by nearly 900 people, from 54 countries, particular focus was given to tuberculosis (TB) and co-morbidities; data management for TB control; case detection and case finding; childhood TB; challenges in tobacco control; and multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB).

There were also a civil society and advocacy space, Ekuase Pa (meaning ‘good village for the communities’), championing community engagement and human rights. Supporting activities included the Africa TB Caucus pre-conference parliamentarian meeting and the ‘Every Breath Counts’ walk, which saw civil society, parliamentarians and scientists walking in solidarity against the toll of TB in the region.

Speaking about the importance of Africa in accelerating implementation, Dr Paula Fujiwara, Scientific Director, The Union said: “Africa is The Union’s home – this is where we started. We are here in every sense – we have projects in Kenya, Zimbabwe, DRC, Benin – innovative projects that will directly affect the treatment and care of TB patients. Our commitment to Africa is really, really strong.”

“It is a tribute to the organisers’ tireless work that this conference was the largest ever Union region event in Africa. I hope that The Union’s region conferences continue to be an essential platform for raising critical issues and connecting the science community with broader networks and audiences. Our region conferences are what make The Union unique and truly impactful.”

DR JEREMIAH CHAKAYA MUHWA
President of The Union
FROM EVIDENCE TO PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION

For nearly 100 years The Union has drawn together the best scientific evidence and expertise to address the most pressing public health challenges affecting people living in poverty around the world. Know. Share. Act.

**KNOW**

- 12 peer-reviewed research papers were published by Union experts and operational research specialists. These covered topics on TB, MDR-TB, and HIV from countries across the region, and were published in *Public Health Action*, and *the International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease* among others.

- The Union is leading an observational study to combat childhood TB. The study, Investigated Transmission of Childhood TB (TITI, for its initials in French), is taking place in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon and the Central African Republic with funding from 5% Initiative Expertise-France.

- In May, The Union participated in a high-level panel discussion on TB research and development, as part of the World Economic Forum on Africa 2017. The Union presented The Life Prize (formerly the 3P Project), a new approach for incentivising the collaborative development of better and more affordable TB treatment for all who need it.

**SHARE**

- The Union Zimbabwe Office led a media mentorship programme to increase public awareness of TB. Journalist mentees produced over 70 articles and broadcasts on a broad range of TB related topics.

- The Union Zimbabwe Office supported the premiere of a new film to raise awareness and challenge TB stigma. Called *The Lucky Specials*, the film is set in Southern Africa to draw attention to the issue of TB in the region, where a third of the world’s countries with the highest burden of TB are situated.

- The Union DR Congo Office runs active case finding in high risk communities. The project released statistics showing that 219,765 people have received TB screening and 5,103 patients have been diagnosed with TB.

**ACT**

- As part of Challenge TB, The Union started an active screening campaign for high-risk groups in 18 districts in Zimbabwe, including miners – who have some of the highest incidences of TB in the world.

- Supported by The Union Zimbabwe Office, Zimbabwe’s Vice President Phelekezela Mphoko and Minister of Health and Child Care Dr David Parirenyatwa signed the Barcelona Declaration on TB and the Bulawayo Declaration on HIV-TB, to demonstrate the Government’s commitment to ending the two diseases by 2030.

- The Union’s experts continued providing technical support to the diabetes-TB project in Uganda and Zimbabwe, their support included bi-directional screening and operational research.