THE UNION EUROPE REGION IN 2018

THE UNION REPORT EXPOSES SILENT EPIDEMIC OF CHILD TB

At the World Health Assembly, in Geneva, The Union launched a new report ‘Silent Epidemic: A Call to Action Against Child Tuberculosis’, calling for urgent action to protect children from tuberculosis (TB).

An estimated one million children under the age of 15 become sick with TB each year. Of those, 239,000 — nearly one in four — die. Most of these deaths are treatable and preventable with simple, cost-effective public health measures.

Within global public health, it is an open secret that health systems neglect children with TB because children are less contagious than adults and because the standard tools used to diagnose TB work less well in children.

This neglect can no longer be excused on grounds of economy or expediency. The report — launched at a side event of the 71st World Health Assembly hosted by The Union, the Forum of International Respiratory Societies, and KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation — calls for immediate action to be taken.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Paula I Fujiwara, Scientific Director, The Union, said:

“Children with TB rarely die when they receive standard treatment for the disease — of the 239,000 children who die from TB every year, 90 percent of those were left untreated. TB is preventable, treatable, curable. The continuing medical neglect of child TB, resulting in millions of avoidable deaths, constitutes a human rights violation by any reasonable measure.”

Read the report at childtb.theunion.org
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

• Union experts, Chen-Yuan Chiang and Arnaud Trébucq, published a letter to the editor of the European Respiratory Journal responding to the World Health Organization recommendation that in ‘patients who require TB re-treatment, the category II regimen should no longer be prescribed and drug-susceptibility testing should be conducted to inform the choice of treatment regimen’. The letter suggested that it might be advisable not to abandon the category II regimen prematurely before a better option is available in TB re-treatment.

• Nineteen peer-reviewed research papers were published by Union experts and operational research specialists. These covered topics such as TB among adolescents, HIV, drug-resistant TB and evidence based research for shortened MDR-TB regimen. They were published in a broad spectrum of publications including The Lancet, Tropical Medicine and International Health, Public Health Action, and the International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease among others.

• The Union provided technical assistance and training across Europe on subjects including child TB in France and the Netherlands, and workshops in Switzerland and Russia on operational and basic science research.

SHARE

• Nearly 2,500 people from 125 countries attended the 17th World Conference on Tobacco or Health in Cape Town, South Africa, with the theme ‘Uniting the World for a Tobacco Free Generation’. The Union is secretariat for the conference and highlights included a youth pre-conference and a special ministerial session.

• Speaking in Geneva on World No Tobacco Day, Executive Director of The Union, José Luis Castro, called for political leadership at the highest level to draw governments and heads of state together to end the scourge of tobacco-related disease, premature death and the poverty it brings.

• A dedicated European track featured at The 49th Union World Conference on Lung Health in The Hague for the very first time. Developed in partnership with The Union’s Europe Region, these sessions share experiences and challenges that are specific to the region.

ACT

• At the 71st World Health Assembly, in Geneva, in May, The Union asked member states to approve a declaration at the upcoming United Nations High-Level Meeting on TB that would commit to reaching all people effected by TB and to have a people-centred response. The Union called for accelerated development into essential new drugs, diagnostics and vaccines, and for crucial funds to be invested to end TB.

• As part of the ‘Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use’, The Union’s Department of Tobacco Control supported the implementation of strong new legislation to reduce tobacco use and protect people from the harms of smoking in Georgia.

• The Union hosted the General Assembly of the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS) at its Paris headquarters. FIRS — a consortium of nine international lung health and respiratory organisations, including The Union — discussed a 12 month strategy with a focus on ensuring the High-Level Meetings on Non-communicable diseases and TB fulfil their potential.