Over the last decade, great progress has been made in developing the most promising pipeline of new, life-saving TB technologies in history. This progress has been delivered largely by Product Development Partnerships (PDPs), with critical support from the public, private, and philanthropic sectors. These new tools are critical to avert the nearly 9 million TB infections each year—and the 1.4 million lives lost to TB around the world in 2010 alone.

**Inadequate Funding**

Despite the urgent need for new tools, the overall global investment in the research and development (R&D) of such products is woefully inadequate. Data released by the Treatment Action Group (TAG) and the Stop TB Partnership revealed that global donors invested less than one-third of what’s needed to stay on track for the WHO’s longer term TB elimination plan. The $617 million investment in TB R&D in 2010 falls markedly short of the $2 billion annual target.

**Reaching the finish line**

Without sustained funding and political will, the world risks reversing the recent progress made in the fight against TB. Governments must seize the chance to invest in these critical life-saving technologies and ensure that drugs, diagnostics, and vaccines developed with a decade of public investment won’t stall in late stage development.

TB will not simply go away if ignored. Without new tools, the disease will continue to rob millions of health, hope, and prosperity, and prevent global economic development.

**A unique opportunity**

Governments and other donors should view the findings of TB funding surveys as a wake-up call, especially in light of recent news of new outbreaks of virtually untreatable TB in India and beyond. We must work to put product development for diseases of poverty back on track. Now is a time of tremendous opportunity, with dozens of potential products within the reach of patients. Donors must commit to take them across the finish line or lose a historic opportunity to impact global health.