



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **TB ALLIANCE APPLAUDS ACTION BY HEALTH LEADERS ON XDR-TB AND SAYS MORE RESOURCES ARE NEEDED TO SPEED DEVELOPMENT OF NEW DRUGS**

**NEW YORK CITY (September 7, 2006)** -- The Global Alliance for TB Drug Development (TB Alliance) today applauded the efforts of health experts meeting in Johannesburg to address the spread of a deadly new form of tuberculosis through tactics that include the accelerated development of new drugs.

The expert consultation today was called by the South African Medical Research Council, World Health Organization and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention following a recent outbreak in the KwaZulu Natal province in South Africa of XDR-TB (extensive or extreme drug resistant TB). In the outbreak, all but one of 53 patients died within an average of 25 days from the moment when resistant TB was first suspected.

“The TB Alliance and our partners are committed to the rapid development of new drugs to fight TB, and our battle assumes even greater urgency now,” said Dr. Maria Freire, President and CEO of the TB Alliance. “The spread of XDR-TB reinforces the critical need to invest dramatically more to speed TB drug development and therapies that can be used specifically for this terrifying new mutation of the disease.”

In consultations today, the group in Johannesburg called for the further acceleration of research and development of new drugs to replace the 40-year-old regimen of treatment. The experts said that new anti-TB drugs are desperately required to treat XDR-TB patients and urged further investment by governments around the world to ensure an adequate number of new drugs are in the pipeline and in clinical trials.

The health experts stressed that the real danger is that HIV infection will fast track the spread of XDR-TB into a truly global epidemic. The virulent form already is spreading across Southern Africa and has been found in other countries. XDR-TB is defined as resistance to at least three of the six commonly used second line drugs, in addition to resistance to rifampin and isoniazid, two of the mainstays of first line treatment.

The TB Alliance, with support from The Bill & Melinda Gates and Rockefeller Foundations and the UK, Dutch, Irish and U.S. governments, has nine TB specific development projects in its pipeline and in clinical trials. The Alliance’s goal is to create an entirely new package of drugs that dramatically reduce treatment time, improve adherence and curtail the incidence of drug resistant strains of TB. The first of these drugs could be ready by 2010.

“We have made enormous progress in a very short time, but we need the G8 governments to follow through on commitments made last year to allow us to accelerate the development of drugs against TB strains resistant to all known treatment,” Freire said.



## **About the Global Alliance for TB Drug Development**

The Global Alliance for TB Drug Development (TB Alliance) is a not-for-profit, public-private partnership accelerating the discovery and/or development of affordable, new anti-TB drugs that will shorten treatment, be effective against multi-drug resistant strains, treat HIV-TB co-infection, and improve treatment of latent infection. Working with public and private research laboratories worldwide, it is leading the development of the first, most comprehensive portfolio of TB drug candidates in three decades. It operates with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) and Irish Aid. For more information on TB drug development and the TB Alliance, please visit [www.tballiance.org](http://www.tballiance.org).

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