

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Sydney Rubin

srubin@ccapr.com; 512 442 1113

**Global Alliance for TB Drug Development Applauds Innovative,
International Effort to Fund New Drugs**
‘UNITAID’ Announces Funding Initiative Based On International Air Travel

NEW YORK (Sept. 18, 2006) – The Global Alliance for TB Drug Development (TB Alliance), a not-for-profit leader in researching and developing new drugs to combat tuberculosis, today applauded an innovative, international effort to fund drugs purchased through a new tax on air travel.

“The UNITAID initiative is an important and creative way of supporting critical initiatives in global public health,” said Dr. Maria Freire, President and CEO of the TB Alliance. “The small tax on airline tickets will be a big boost for access to new treatments for tuberculosis and other diseases of the poor.”

The General Assembly of the United Nations is expected to announce on Tuesday the launch of UNITAID, an international drug purchasing facility geared to enable the poorest citizens in developing nations to have access to treatments for malaria, AIDS and TB. Initiated by French President Jacques Chirac and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, the initiative was joined by Chile and Norway and supported by many international partners and about 40 countries, including Congo, Cyprus, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mauritius, Nicaragua, Norway, and the United Kingdom.

UNITAID will be financed by revenue from the international contribution on airline tickets that will be combined with contributions from other partners. With a small staff and operating through existing organizations, UNITAID will work to help lower prices on badly needed treatments for diseases that disproportionately affect the poor. About \$500 to \$600 million is expected to be collected by the end of the year.

“Someone dies every 15 seconds from TB, which is the leading infectious killer of people with HIV,” Dr. Freire said. “A program that can bring assistance to the millions of people suffering this terrible disease is to be applauded. We are grateful that this one has come to fruition.”

The Global Alliance for TB Drug Development is a not-for-profit, product development 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 TB-HIV 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.