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Contact: press@theunion.org



International Union Against
Tuberculosis and Lung Disease
Health solutions for the poor

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TB partners launch first roadmap to jointly stop the transmission of bovine and zoonotic tuberculosis

The first-ever roadmap to combat animal tuberculosis (bovine TB) and its transmission to humans, referred to as zoonotic TB, most often through consumption of contaminated untreated meat or dairy products from diseased animals, calls for close collaboration between those working to improve human and animal health. It is built on a [One Health approach](#), addressing health risks across sectors.

The [Roadmap for Zoonotic TB](#) was launched today at the [48th Union World Conference on Lung Health](#) taking place in Guadalajara, Mexico this week. Four partners in health, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) and the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) have joined forces to develop the roadmap and address the major health and economic impact of this disease.

New data released by the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that over 140,000 people fall ill and more than 12,000 people lose their lives each year to zoonotic TB – mostly in the African and the South-East Asian regions.

““We have made progress towards ending TB, yet to a large extent people with zoonotic TB are left behind. The priorities outlined in this roadmap highlight the need for multisectoral action to tackle this neglected form of TB and achieve the targets of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and WHO’s End TB Strategy,” said Dr Mario Raviglione, Director of the WHO Global TB Programme. “Together we can save lives and secure livelihoods”.

Bovine TB is most often communicated to humans through food consumption, usually non-heat-treated dairy products or raw or improperly cooked meat from diseased animals. Direct transmission from infected animals or animal products to people can also occur.

"This multidisciplinary roadmap represents a milestone in the fight against TB in both people and animals," said Dr Paula I Fujiwara, Scientific Director, The Union. "Better technologies, better science and better governance for affected communities bearing the bovine TB burden in poorer rural areas must become the new mantra if we are to get on the path to eliminating TB absolutely everywhere”.

But zoonotic TB is largely hidden. The advanced laboratory tools are required to diagnose zoonotic TB are frequently unavailable. The disease is resistant to pyrazinamide - one of the standard first-line medications used to treat TB. Patients are therefore often misdiagnosed and may receive ineffective treatment.

“We must recognise the interdependence of the health of people and animals in the fight against TB. Specifically, bovine TB, caused by *Mycobacterium bovis*, affects cattle, threatens people’s livelihoods and results in major economic and trade barriers, as well as posing a major risk to food safety and human health,” said Dr Berhe Tekola, Director of the FAO Animal Production and Health Division.

Ten priority actions to tackle zoonotic TB in people and bovine TB in animals

The roadmap, supported by the four partners, articulates ten priority actions that human and animal health actors should take, and defines milestones for the short- and medium-term:

IMPROVE THE EVIDENCE BASE

1. Systematically survey, collect, analyse and report better quality data on the incidence of zoonotic TB in people, and improve surveillance and reporting of bovine TB in livestock and wildlife.
2. Expand availability of appropriate diagnostic tools and capacity for testing to identify and characterize zoonotic TB in people.
3. Identify and address research gaps in zoonotic and bovine TB including epidemiology, diagnostic tools, vaccines, effective patient treatment regimens, health systems, and interventions coordinated with Veterinary Services.

REDUCE TRANSMISSION BETWEEN ANIMALS AND HUMANS

4. Develop strategies to improve food safety.
5. Develop capacity of the animal health sector to reduce the prevalence of TB in livestock.
6. Identify key populations and risks pathways for transmission of zoonotic TB.

STRENGTHEN INTERSECTORAL COLLABORATION

7. Increase awareness of zoonotic TB, engage key public and private stakeholders and establish effective intersectoral collaboration.
8. Develop and implement policies and guidelines for the prevention, surveillance, diagnosis, and treatment of zoonotic TB, in line with intergovernmental standards where relevant.
9. Identify opportunities for community-tailored interventions that jointly address human and animal health.
10. Develop an investment case to advocate for political commitment and funding to address zoonotic TB across sectors, at the global, regional and national levels.

Many of these recommended interventions for controlling bovine and zoonotic TB will also bring substantial benefits for the prevention of other zoonotic and food-borne diseases, for example caused by *Brucella*.

Addressing the animal health and socio-economic impact of zoonotic TB

The impact of zoonotic TB extends beyond human health.

Dr Matthew Stone, OIE Deputy Director General, International Standards and Science, noted, “Preventing and controlling bovine TB at its animal source is crucial to avoid its transmission to humans, improve food safety and protect the livelihood of many rural communities. To this aim, the implementation of strategies based on international standards and a cross-sectorial approach will enable improved surveillance and diagnosis of the disease in animals and consequently reduce the risks for humans”.

Bovine TB also threatens animal welfare and those with livelihoods based on livestock. The disease can economically devastate cattle production with losses related to animal production, markets and trade, as well as costs incurred to implement surveillance and control programmes. In order to eliminate the disease, domestic livestock found to be infected with bovine TB must be slaughtered under veterinary supervision.

Wealthier countries are affected as well. In the U.S., more than US\$200 million were required in emergency funding between 2000 and 2008 to respond to bovine TB outbreaks. Wildlife can also be infected, serving as a reservoir of infection for livestock and people. This can potentially threaten wildlife conservation efforts.

The roadmap is a critical call for action to energize the response and resources urgently needed to tackle zoonotic and bovine TB.

Related links

- [Roadmap for zoonotic tuberculosis](#) (PDF 1 MB)
- [Factsheet on zoonotic tuberculosis](#) (PDF 620 KB)

Contact:

- **WHO:** Hannah Monica Dias, Communications Officer
diash@who.int
+41 79 4770435
- **The Union:** Michael Kessler
michael.kessler@inton-media.com
+52 33 1242 1480
- **The Union:** Jo Waters
jwaters@theunion.org
+52 33 1827 2720
- **OIE:** Catherine Bertrand-Ferrandis, Head of Communication Unit
media@oie.int
+33 1 44 15 19 72
- **FAO:** Peter Mayer, Information Officer
Peter.Mayer@fao.org
+39 06 570 53304

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Conference Programme: download the online iPlanner [here](#)

Media Registration:

Media are strongly encouraged to [register](#) prior to the conference.

Press contacts:

Jo Waters
Global Communications - The Union
Mobile: +44 (0) 7949 770 409
e-mail: jwaters@theunion.org

Michael Kessler
Michael Kessler Media
Mobile: +34 655 792 699
e-mail: michael.kessler@inton-media.com

[About The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease \(The Union\)](#)

The Union is a global scientific organisation with the mission to improve health among people living in poverty. We do that by conducting scientific research, working with governments and other agencies to translate research into better health for people around the world, and delivering projects directly in the field. The Union is made up of a membership body of people around the world who help to advance our mission, and a scientific institute that implements public health projects within countries. For close to 100 years, we have been leaders in the fight against some of the world's biggest killers, including tuberculosis, lung diseases and tobacco use.

[About the World Conference on Lung Health](#)

The Union World Conference on Lung Health is the world's largest gathering of clinicians and public health workers, health programme managers, policymakers, researchers and advocates working to end the suffering caused by lung disease, with a focus specifically on the challenges faced by the low- and middle-income countries. Of the 10 million people who die each year from lung diseases, some 80 percent live in these resource-limited countries.

This year's conference theme, '*Accelerating Toward Elimination*', will centre discussion around the global lung health agenda and the ambitious goals that have been set for the public health community working in lung health. It will focus on how to accelerate toward elimination on multiple fronts: tuberculosis (TB) and co-infections, improving tobacco control and reducing air pollution.