



# The Role of Parliamentarians and the Global TB Caucus

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# The Global TB Caucus

- The Global TB Caucus was launched in 2014, by The Rt Hon Nick Herbert CBE MP, after many years of successful campaigning to the UK government, through the All Parliaments Parliamentary Group on TB in the British Parliament. Mr Jose Luis Castro, Executive Director of The Union, offered to host and fund a meeting at the World Lung Health Conference in Barcelona
- With over 2500 members in 150 countries, the Global TB Caucus is the largest parliamentary network dedicated to an infectious disease in the world: Tuberculosis (TB).
- Over the last six years, the Caucus has built an interconnected network of parliamentarians, health officials, civil society, partners, researchers, TB survivors and medical professionals who take action everyday to strengthen global health systems and improve public health infrastructures at the local, national, regional and international level.

# Global TB Caucus Executive Committee meeting on COVID-19 and TB

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of May, the Executive Committee of the GTBC, consisting of all Co-Chairs met to discuss the COVID-19 pandemic and TB. The key summary outcomes of the meeting were as follows:

- Reaffirming commitment to meeting the UN HLM targets and the need for a holistic, financed and sustainable response to TB
- Stating the importance of working closely with and supporting the WHO and the Global Fund in establishing a strong health system and working through the principles of UHC
- Call on governments to sustain essential health services including routine TB services, even as lockdowns or restrictions are in place
- Pushing for people-centred legislation that protects human rights

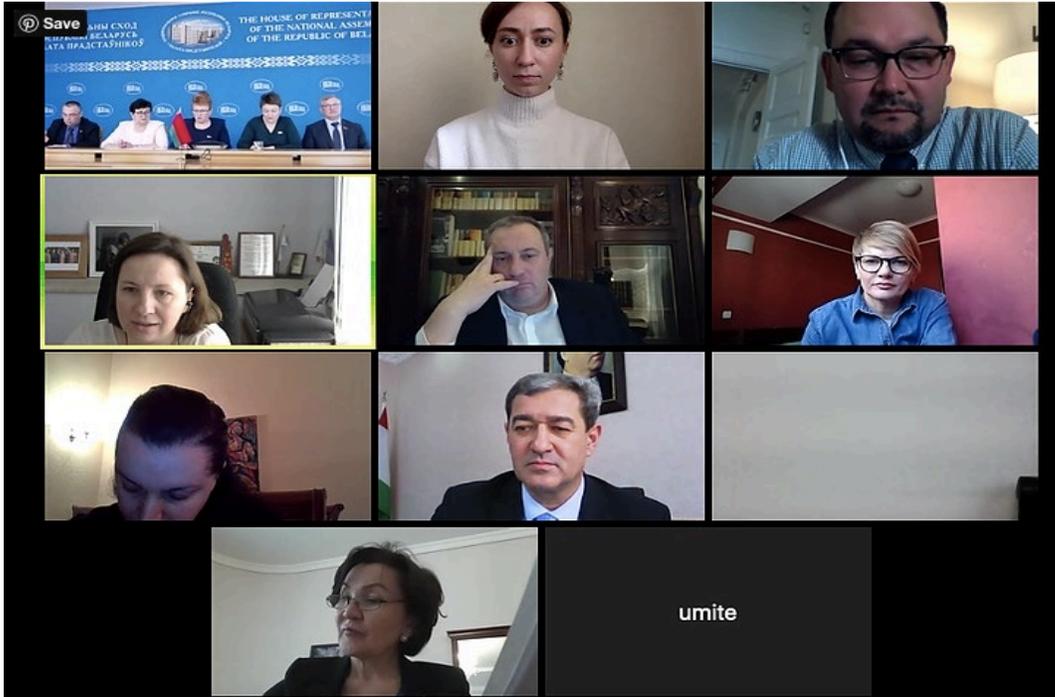


# Global TB Caucus Executive Committee meeting on COVID-19 and TB

A grid of 25 video conference thumbnails arranged in 5 rows and 5 columns. Each thumbnail shows a participant's video feed with their name and a small red icon in the bottom left corner. The participants are:

- Row 1: anne kuik, Deliana Garcia GTBC Secreta..., Nick Herbert, Angelina Tan, Alison Suttie
- Row 2: Lada Bulakh, Claudio Marte, Gisela Scaglia, Sarah Kirk (GTBC Secretariat), Christopher Kalila
- Row 3: Luis Gallo, Katherine Kapunan (Ofc Con..., Cintia Dantas (G..., Deborah Ogwuc..., Hon Warren Entsch
- Row 4: Serville, Dr Ngayap Pierre Flambeau, Hon Mule, evaline kibuchi (... , Kate Thompson...

## EECA regional calls with heads of national caucuses



2 calls since the beginning of the COVID pandemic: on April 7th and on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

During these meetings they discussed:

- the impact of COVID-19 on tuberculosis services. They were joined by several specialists from WHO and PAS Center during the first call.
- Shared their national experience as well as their interrogations regarding the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Given the very different realities in the region, participants exposed various approaches to protect the rights of people affected by TB.
- insisted on the prevention of any cut on national TB budgets;
- agreed to keep on gathering online through the global crisis to monitor the situation and take action when necessary.

On –line meeting between Baroness Alison Suttie, Co-Chair of the Eurasian Parliamentary Group on Tuberculosis and Ms. Lada Bulakh, Co-Chair of the Regional Caucus TB in EECA region



Issues discussed:

- 1) Protection of the rights of TB patients and the rights of people in general in the controlled territories of Ukraine;
- 2) Migration and the need to protect the rights of patients who come from Russia
- 3) Outpatients care;
- 4) The importance of the attention of members of the national TB caucus regarding national TB budgets and the prevention of its redistribution to the needs of other infectious diseases in the subsequent period of post-coronavirus.

# European Co-Chairs catchup

26th June 2020

- To discuss & outline the work plan of the EPGTB for the remainder of 2020
- To think about how to engage new, or distracted, members of the Global TB Caucus
- To discuss the agenda & invitees of the call on 3rd July 2020 about TB and Covid-19

- In January 2020 the Global TB Caucus arranged a hearing in the European Parliament on the theme of research and development in TB.

The hearing was hosted by then MEP Martin Horwood and current MEP Frédérique Ries, and formally launched the Global TB Caucus' engagement with the European Union.

# Next steps for the WE region after Executive Committee meeting

## Actions for the Eurasian Parliamentary Group on TB

- Call between Co-chairs to decide messaging and advocacy strategy
- Wider call between the European MPs and other TB stakeholders such as the Global Fund, WHO etc, to inform parliamentarians about the impact of Covid-19 on TB programs, research and development funding and the overall progress towards ending TB.
- Use of parliamentary questions, motions and engagement with parliamentary committees to ensure that funding for TB in bilateral, multilateral and research and development is protected.

# Regular calls with AP and African FPs of GTBC

- Since March we held 2 calls in AP region and 2 calls in African region
- Discussed updates from each region and shared updates from GTBC global and regional activities
- Shared challenges in engaging with MPs in times of COVID between regions and discussed solutions on this matter.

# Regular calls with the most HBC countries of COVID epidemic

- Two calls since March on issues of COVID and its impact on TB patients
- Participation of GFATM during the last call where it was discussed issues of domestic resource mobilization and financing. Was provided a summary/overview of the work that GFATM is doing to ensure sustainable financing is available for TB in the coming years.
- Discussion on possibilities on what could be done to ensure TB services won't be interrupted during the COVID pandemic in most high TB burden countries and the needed help from GTBC.

# Thank you

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# What can MPs and elected officials do?

- Meet with their Ministers of Health to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on TB
- Meet with CSOs and community representatives in order to better understand the ground realities of the national TB response
- Meet with their National TB Program Managers and staff to receive updates on the current state of TB in their – at the national level and within their own constituencies
- Conduct a parliamentary briefing on TB to discuss the national TB response and progress against targets adopted
- Speak and ask questions in parliament regarding the national TB response
- Using their position as elected representatives to organize meetings at the district level to sensitize officials on the need for strong action on TB

# Parliamentary action around TB during the COVID-19 pandemic

- In Uganda, Members of Parliament reported that they approved an increase the Health Budget for the financial year 2020/21 in order to support the efforts of the MoH to respond to COVID-19, but also address other health needs including SRHR and TB.
- In India, Members of the GCAT Expert group met and provided recommendations to the MOH to ensure TB services and funding was maintained during the COVID response.
- The Federal House of Representatives in Nigeria has inaugurated a Committee on COVID-19 which includes the chairs of health-related committees, namely: House Committee on AIDS Tuberculosis and Malaria Control; House Committee on Primary Health Care and; House Committee on Health Institutions, to join other agencies in the fight against the pandemic.
- The Global TB Caucus, working with partners, has conducted several national calls involving MPs, Ministry officials, NTP manager, CSOs and community. These have been held in:
  - Armenia
  - Nepal
  - Azerbaijan
  - Ukraine
  - Tajikistan
- Several more such calls are planned for the coming month