Damien Foundation Letter to request World Health Organization (WHO) to put mycobacterium tuberculosis on list of priority resistant bacteria

Brussels, 6th March 2017

The WHO has published on 27th February, 2017 a list of antibiotic-resistant bacteria to guide research, discovery and development of new antibiotics. The list does not include *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* which has motivated a general sentiment of injustice and regret in the community. Many international platforms and actors have reacted and asked WHO to revise this decision. Damien Foundation by means of this letter adds to the International community's global request the possibility to include tuberculosis in the WHO list of global priority pathogens.

Damien Foundation is a Belgian medical non-governmental organization created in 1964 supporting tuberculosis and leprosy control programs in Africa, Asia and Latin America. By promoting operational research in Bangladesh, Burundi, Niger and Democratic Republic of Congo, Damien Foundation contributed to the development of the effective short treatment regimen that has been recommended by WHO to treat multidrug resistant tuberculosis (MDR TB). There is an urgent need of further research to enhance early diagnosis and shorter treatment of TB and M/XDR TB with fewer side effects. The very useful molecular rapid tests for diagnosis of MDR TB are not fully available globally at peripheral level yet, so at the place of diagnosis and treatment. There is also an obvious lack of new drugs to treat extensively resistant tuberculosis (XDR). These issues increase transmission of drug resistant strains into the community and the number of preventable deaths.

We fear that delivering wrong messages to the international community, as we have seen in 2000 after leprosy has been declared eliminated worldwide, would have devastating consequences on the quality of care, research and funding of tuberculosis. That is why we strongly urge that WHO should include *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in the global priority pathogens list.

Sincerely yours,

Mr. Alex Jaucot
General Director
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Indifference kills, Damien Foundation heals

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