**Briefing Document for Government Members re UNGA TB Meeting September 2018**

**The Importance of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) High Level Meeting on Tuberculosis, to be held in New York on 26th September 2018**

The theme of the UNGA meeting is “United to end tuberculosis: an urgent global response to a global epidemic”.

The UNGA meeting follows on from a successful Ministerial Conference on Ending TB in Moscow in November 2017, which resulted in high-level commitments from 120 country leaders to accelerate progress to end tuberculosis (TB).

**The Impact of TB**

TB causes more deaths worldwide than any other infectious disease, including malaria, HIV, Ebola and Zika. 1.7 million people die every year from TB – that’s more than 4500 people every day.

UN Sustainable Development Goal #3 aims to end the TB epidemic, with a global target to eradicate TB by 2030 – currently we are not on track to meet this target.

*[Insert info relevant to your country]* e.g. In the UK there are approximately 6000 new cases of TB every year. TB is linked to poverty, and there are parts of London that have higher rates of TB than many developing countries.

Highly antibiotic resistant strains of the bacteria that causes TB, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, are now found in many European countries. These strains, which WHO has described as ‘virtually untreatable’, pose a significant threat to Europe and the UK. The treatment of drug sensitive TB takes a minimum of six months; highly resistant strains require 2 years’ of treatment, with significant side effects from all these drugs. Nine of the 30 countries with the highest rates of multidrug resistant TB are in Europe. If multidrug resistant TB were to establish a foothold in the UK it would place a substantial strain on the NHS.

In the last 2 centuries TB has killed more people than any other infectious disease, and yet funding for TB R&D has been just 3.4% of total development assistance for health. This compares with funding for HIV, which was 29% in 2015.

It is estimated that bold actions against TB in Europe would save over 3 million lives and US$48 billion in 5 years.

The World’s Leaders need to unite to ensure the global targets are met and millions of lives worldwide are saved.

**Call To Action**

The Global Community needs the UNGA High Level Meeting on TB to be taken seriously, and to lead to increased funding to allow us to develop the tools urgently needed to control the TB epidemic. Better diagnostics, new drugs, and the development of a more effective vaccine are all urgently required.

To demonstrate the importance of the global TB epidemic to *[insert your country]* we request *[insert Country Leader name]* attend the UNGA meeting in person to secure a commitment against TB at the highest level.