

Masoyise Health Programme Seminar
15 October 2020
Talking points for Dr Lucica Ditiu

- On 18 August 2012, in Maputo, the **Heads of States of SADC** countries signed a **historic declaration on Tuberculosis in the Mining Sector. Stop TB Partnership** played an important role in advocacy for this declaration. This declaration recognized that **mineworkers are disproportionately affected by TB and committed to several actions** by the SADC countries.
- Eight years later, by early 2020, there was **significant progress with countries in the Region and stakeholders prioritizing TB in the mining sector** for action. This included **substantial investments** by the **World Bank** and the **Global Fund** in the form of a **regional project on mining and TB**.
- TB rates in **mining affected populations** are still high but not as high as a decade ago and **considerable progress has been made on prevention and care for Silicosis and TB**, as well as on **prevention of dust and occupational health services**.
- **Many challenges still remain** related to TB in mining affected population, including on **stigma and rights**.
- At the global level in 2018, the **UNHLM on TB** resulted in a political declaration with bold targets and commitments. There **was good progress in finding the missing people with TB** in 2018 and to a lesser extent also in 2019. However, in **2020 we saw dramatic fall** in TB notification due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Starting in March 2020, the **Covid-19 pandemic impacted the TB responses in high burden countries across the world**. TB **programmes** got disrupted and TB **notifications** declined rapidly as people were **not able to access** diagnosis and treatment for TB. The **mining sector also got impacted due to lockdowns**.
- **We, at Stop TB Partnership**, in early May 2020, did a **modelling study in collaboration with Imperial College, Avenir Health, Johns Hopkins and USAID**. It showed that unless actions are taken the Covid-19 pandemic **could have an impact of increasing global TB incidence** by 6.3 million and deaths by 1.4 million between now and 2025. **TB incidence and deaths in 2021 would increase** to levels last seen in between 2013 and 2016 respectively – implying a **setback** of at least 5 to 8 years in the fight against TB, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Progress is now completely **off-track**.
We now have the challenge to:
 - **Reverse** as much of the **losses in diagnosis and treatment** of TB to pre-COVID levels in 2021
 - **Accelerate** TB diagnosis and treatment to **reach UNHLM targets by 2022**
 - Prepare and **re-model TB programming in the COVID-19 situation**

To avoid further reversal of our efforts

- **TB Partners have come together and suggested “Catch-up” plans** to achieve this. Catch-up plans could include:

- A **surge-up 6 months TB Campaign**, including high level advocacy and communication campaigns
- **Mitigate the risk of shortage** of financial resources for TB
- Innovate approaches to **restore** TB diagnosis, treatment and prevention, including **use of new tools and virtual and digital care**.

South Africa at the forefront

- In TB, South Africa has been a leader in introducing new tools and scaling them up. It was the first country to **introduce Xpert** as the initial test for TB and scale it up, years ahead of other countries. It is also **leading in new drugs and new regimen for drug-resistant TB**. South Africa has also been a leader in **prioritizing the needs of key populations**, specifically the mining affected population.
- The **WHO Global TB report** published yesterday shows that in 2019 the world made some progress but not enough. **At global level we are not on track and financing is half** of what is needed.
- So, I call for the following:
 - **Countries and financing institutions should increase funding for TB**. In the upcoming **Stop TB Board meeting** we plan to discuss this and hold a **Round Table on TB financing in Africa**.
 - **High burden countries** implement urgently a special **“catch-up” plan to mitigate the impact of Covid pandemic on TB**. **South-South learning is very important** in this context.
 - The **mining sector invests** on improving the **health of mining affected communities** and especially on **bringing new technology and digital health solutions**.
- **Together we must do all we can to protect the rights of mining affected communities and provide them access to TB care and prevention services, irrespective of where they work, live, or come from.**
- ***Stop TB - shoulder to shoulder with South Africa, with partners: committed to further elevate the global call to work for our communities to end TB***