



Richard Elliott, Senior Media Manager Tel.: +41 (0)22 869 1292 – richard.elliott@weforum.org

NEW TOOLKIT HELPS CHINESE COMPANIES TACKLE TUBERCULOSIS HEAD ON

- China intensifies its response in the fight against TB to ward off looming crisis
- Global Health Initiative of the World Economic Forum and The Lilly MDR-TB Partnership launch toolkit to help Chinese companies tackle TB crisis
- The TB toolkit contains guiding principles to help companies plan and implement TB awareness, care and control activities at the workplace and within surrounding communities
- For further information please go to <http://www.weforum.org/globalhealth>
- For more information about the Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2008, visit <http://www.weforum.org/newchampions>

Tianjin, People's Republic of China 26 September 2008 – The Global Health Initiative of the World Economic Forum and The Lilly MDR-TB Partnership today launched an innovative toolkit that aims to boost the involvement of Chinese companies in tackling the TB crisis. TB remains a major concern in China, despite the Chinese government's increased commitment to tackling public health problems, including additional public health funding. The toolkit for China, entitled *Protecting Your Workforce and Surrounding Communities from Tuberculosis*, was launched at the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2008 in Tianjin, People's Republic of China.

"The National TB Control Programme at the Chinese Center for Disease Control has been involved in the development of this toolkit and firmly believes that it will be an important supporting tool for businesses who are seriously thinking about tackling TB among their workforce, their families and dependants," commented **Wang Lixia**, Director, National Center for TB Control and Prevention, Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, People's Republic of China. She added, "We urge businesses in China to help us tackle this public health issue marring the socio-economic well-being of the country and its people."

The resurgence of TB has been worsened by the emergence of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis as well as by the global HIV/AIDS epidemic. According to a recent study by the World Bank, China's economy is heavily impacted by TB deaths, which threaten to stall the booming Chinese economy. With nearly 1.3 million people diagnosed with tuberculosis in China each year, of which 8.9% are multi-drug resistant strains of the disease, there is no better time to intercept its progression.

As TB seriously impacts businesses, disrupting workflow, reducing productivity and increasing both direct costs related to care and treatment and indirect costs, such as the replacement and/or retraining of workers, businesses need to commit to deploying their full resources. "We are at a critical crossroads in TB control," said **David Ricks**, President, Eli Lilly Greater China, People's Republic of China. "By implementing a bold strategy and mobilizing our companies to better leverage our existing skills and competencies, and by providing us with relevant management tools, we are confident that the Chinese business sector will be able to rein in the devastating effects of the disease," he added. Select companies from Eli Lilly Greater China pre-tested the TB toolkit with success. "Feedback from plant managers around the usefulness and timeliness of this toolkit was extremely positive," confirmed Ricks.

The National Tuberculosis Control Programme (NTP), initiated by the General Office of the State Council, is working to support this mission by improving access to high-quality TB care. By helping companies implement a sustainable TB response mechanism, including tackling drug resistant strains and HIV-TB co-infection, it is hoped the TB toolkit will help Chinese companies grasp the opportunities they have to increase their activities in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of TB and TB/HIV co-infections in the workplace, therefore empowering companies to take partial responsibility for the health of their employees.

"The future impact of tuberculosis in China – in terms of economic losses, a weakened workforce and the resulting instability – will be severe unless we take effective measures to control and prevent the disease," declared **Shaloo Puri Kamble**, Adviser on Tuberculosis at the Global Health Initiative of the World Economic Forum. "Tackling TB demands increased commitment both in terms of standardizing the management of existing cases and in the development of new TB tools. Business leaders in China must start to recognize the crucial role they can play in TB care and the importance of the workplace setting as a win-win setting for TB control," she added.

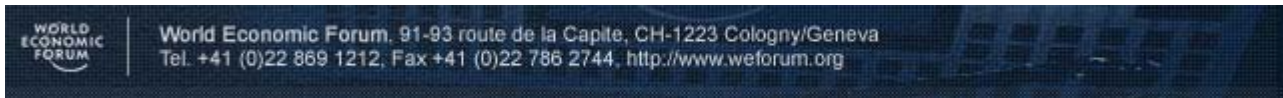
“This TB awareness toolkit recognizes the crucial roles and responsibilities that business communities can play in public health matters. Together with guidelines and case studies, the toolkit will be immensely beneficial to employers in dealing with TB in the workplace. We are also supportive of the recommendation to join hands with the government and key partners from other sectors to maximize individuals’ efforts on public health awareness programmes. We are eager to use this long-awaited tool to help strengthen our efforts to raise awareness and integrate our existing TB and HIV initiatives at the workplace and surrounding communities,” said **Calvin Tsang**, Director of Human Resources, Guangdong Esquel Textile Co., People’s Republic of China.

The Forum works in close partnership with the Chinese government on this issue through the China Health Alliance (CHA) – an alliance that brings together government, businesses, NGOs and international organizations in a joint effort to address the growing economic and social threats of HIV/AIDS and TB in China. But more can and needs to be done. Despite being preventable, treatable and curable, TB continues to devastate South and South-East Asia. It is time for the business sector in China to deploy the full scale of its resources and power to help accelerate the country’s response to this threatening epidemic.

For more information about The Lilly MDR-TB Partnership, contact: J.J.Divino, Lilly, +41 (0)79 669 0986, divinojj@lilly.com

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