

Esteemed Health Secretaries of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa,

I speak today on behalf of a coalition of Indian activists concerned with improving the lives of people affected by tuberculosis (TB) and HIV. We are also here representing more than 200 organizations and individuals from across the world that have sent an urgent plea to your Ministers of Health to increase investments in TB research.

TB continues to be the leading infectious killer worldwide. The treatment, prevention, and diagnostic options currently available are simply not enough to end this epidemic. The BRICS countries bear a special responsibility in ending TB. BRICS countries are home to nearly half of all the world's new TB cases and deaths. Yet, despite their large TB burdens and economies, the BRICS countries account for just four percent of reported investments in TB research.

India has led the way for BRICS countries, contributing \$11.1 million to TB research. The Indian Council of Medical Research has also launched the India TB Research and Development Consortium. We look forward to the commitment of funds necessary to enable implementation of this new consortium's research agenda.

BRICS countries can do much more. South Africa gave \$3.9 million to TB research. And Brazil just \$1.9 million. China and Russia did not report their TB research spending.

We commend your governments' previous 2012 Communiqué and the 2015 Moscow Declaration. In these statements, the BRICS nations resolved to continue collaboration toward TB elimination. Your ministers highlighted research on TB vaccines, medicines, and diagnostics as an important component of a cooperation plan expected at the end of tomorrow's meeting.

However, we also acknowledge that these statements are only as valuable as the actions they inspire.

So today, we again ask that BRICS countries commit to tripling their investments in TB research. We first asked this in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2015. We asked it again in a petition this past November, which we again deliver today.

We appeal to you as Health Secretaries of the BRICS nations to deepen your countries' resolve to fighting TB. We call on you to commit to working with your respective Ministries of Health, Ministries of Science and Technology, and Ministries of Finance to triple your country's investments in TB research.

Only with increased investment in TB research, and full access to the benefits from research, can we truly see an end to TB.