Gudrun Kopp, Member of the German Bundestag and Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

Statement on the occasion of the publication of the WHO Global TB Control Report 2010
[Press conference in the margins of the 41st World Conference of the International Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease]

[Berlin, International Congress Centre, Room 42]

Prof. Loddenkemper,
Dr. Raviglione,
Dr. Billo,
Prof. Kaufmann,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you so much for inviting me, it is a great pleasure to be here.

I. The Report
I would first like to thank WHO for this opportunity to take part in the launch of this year’s Global Tuberculosis Control Report.

The Report provides important insights into current achievements and challenges in tuberculosis control. And, in a way, it is an accountability report submitted to the international community, which has committed itself to taking action against tuberculosis.

The report shows very clearly that tuberculosis is a disease that poses a global threat – a disease that just a few decades ago was believed to be a thing of the past. As we all know, there is no effective and approved vaccine or preventive treatment against the disease. So prevention strategies need to continue to focus on treatment for those who have acquired the disease and may potentially infect others.

II. Global TB situation
In 2009, there were more than nine million incident cases. And globally, more people die of tuberculosis than of any other treatable infectious disease – 4,700 people a day.

We are all agreed that this is a totally unacceptable situation that presents us with huge challenges. One major problem, apart from co-infection with HIV/AIDS (which is not limited to Africa), has been the development of drug-resistant TB, because it reduces the chances of successful treatment and considerably increases the social costs of TB.

The point is not only to develop new drugs but also to use modern diagnostics that facilitate quick and reliable resistance testing. However, most developing countries and emerging markets lack the capacity for that, especially those that bear the brunt of the global tuberculosis epidemic. As a consequence, it has so far only been possible to detect about 12 per cent of the estimated number of cases of drug-resistant TB, and even far fewer of these patients have access to standardized treatment. Only swift and internationally coordinated action will prevent us from
getting to a point at which even the resources available in the 21st century will no longer suffice to deal with the problem.

Joint and coordinated action is not only needed in the research sector but also, in many forms, on building health system capacity, so as to address the complexity of the TB epidemic. Let me mention just a few things that need to happen:

- Cooperation between governmental and private health services must be improved. In many countries, the vast majority of patients with tuberculosis symptoms initially turn to the private sector.
- Prisons – which in many countries are a breeding ground and driving force for the tuberculosis epidemic – must be effectively included in TB control programs.
- And, finally, health system capacity must be enhanced in such a way that it can be ensured that patients are continuously looked after in the course of their treatment over several months.

The Global Plan to Stop TB, an updated version of which was published in October, contains strategies and clear targets that we all need to help implement and achieve.

III. World Conference
The 41st World Conference of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, which began here in Berlin today, brings together representatives of stakeholder organizations, national program directors from many countries as well as leading international TB experts, with the purpose of learning from each other and jointly reinforcing their efforts against the disease. The decision to choose Berlin as the venue for this year's Conference was made in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Robert Koch's death. Since Robert Koch's time, Germany has provided much inspiration to international tuberculosis control and continues to be heavily involved in the effort against this global epidemic.

IV. German contribution to TB control
To help fight tuberculosis, the German government contributes to multilateral organizations (especially the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria) and operates bilateral TB control programs in some of the most severely affected countries, for instance in Central Asia and Pakistan.

Through its development cooperation, Germany helps to fund and implement the Global Plan to Stop TB through the Stop TB Partnership. This effort is based on the principle of coordinated action on the basis of division of labor between the various development partners.

I would like to thank WHO for its leadership and standard-setting in TB control. The Global TB Control Report provides an overview and detailed analysis of global data, thus giving us a basis for addressing the enormous challenges ahead of us.

I am confident that the World Conference will take this up in many ways and that we will jointly take another step toward a world that is free of this deadly threat – the world Robert Koch had wished for.

Thank you very much for your attention.