MESSAGE OF SUPPORT
from the Stop TB Partnership Coordinating Board - RIO

The Stop TB Partnership Coordinating Board congratulates and commends the government of the People's Republic of China, Ministers of Health and national delegations, the World Health Organization the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other partners for committing to meet in Beijing, China (1-3 April) to turn the tide on the tragic and preventable MDR and XDR tuberculosis epidemic before it overwhelsms us.

Your deliberations today come at a crucial time for the future of tuberculosis control and for the communities affected by this disease. This is a pivotal meeting addressing a grave and critical issue.

The estimated half a million cases of MDR-TB that emerge each year undermine and threaten our common global efforts to control tuberculosis. As we note with concern the emergence of XDR-TB, we recognize that it is both a socio-economic developmental challenge and public health security threat that can no longer be ignored.

The Stop TB Partnership believes that the targets set out in the Global Plan to Stop TB (2006 -2015) and developed further in the MDR-TB Response Plan are realistic and achievable. The Coordinating Board on behalf of the entire Stop TB Partnership encourages you to show bold and creative leadership in your discussions and invest now to prevent an even bigger catastrophe affecting us all in the future.

As Coordinating Board members and partners, we endorse the Civil Society Declaration issued at the 3rd Stop TB Partners Forum and applaud the commitments and five year plans that will be made and developed in the coming days. We ask that you give your full political commitment and support to the implementation of these plans and to address the barriers to effective prevention and treatment of MDR TB. We also ask that as you return home, within 90 days, you meet with Stop TB partners in your own country to review these plans and discuss how we can work together to overcome the bottlenecks and deliver on all of the key elements of the Call for Action that you deliberate, debate and endorse today. The Stop TB Partnership is fully committed to working hand in hand with you in this critical effort.

Thank you.

Irene Koek,
Chair of the Coordinating Board of the Stop TB Partnership