

## Wanted: Leaders for a TB-Free World

*“The key is this: be brave; be determined (...) when life pushes you, you ought to push back harder!”  
– Nandita Venkatesan, TB survivor and advocate.*

Nandita Venkatesan was born to dance. As a young girl, she trained as a Bharatnatyam dancer in Mumbai, India but that all changed when tuberculosis (TB) entered her life. For nine years as a teenager and young adult Nandita battled TB. The bacteria took over her body, and fighting it required years of toxic medications, and multiple surgeries. Eventually she ended up permanently losing her hearing due to side effects from the drugs. Nandita can no longer hear the music that fueled her dance. ([Watch her video](#))

But in her recovery she found dance again and pushed through her disability into a life beyond TB. “I took to dance as a way to emerge from my closet and as a means to regain my shattered confidence.” Nandita is an inspiration. And on World TB Day this year, we join her and the millions of other survivors and communities affected by TB in continuing the fight.

**March 24<sup>th</sup> is World TB Day**, an occasion to mobilize political and social commitment towards eliminating the TB epidemic. We are at a crossroads in the global response to TB. Funding is declining in many countries and global funding for research and development into new medicines and diagnostics is stagnating.<sup>1</sup>

But there is hope. In September, 2018 the United Nations will hold a special “High-Level Meeting” on Tuberculosis (HLM on TB)<sup>3</sup> and we will be pushing for heads of state and major political leaders to attend. These meetings are rare and this is the first ever for tuberculosis. They have only ever held six on global health issues, but each one has resulted in major global progress. The HLM on TB is the political moment we’ve been looking for to align the world and spur momentum to meeting the 2030 Agenda, and fulfil the End TB Strategy.

- The world agreed to end TB by 2030, but deaths still aren’t declining
- In 2017 TB claimed 1.7 million lives, more than HIV and malaria combined<sup>2</sup>
- TB causes illness in 1 million children, and 150,000 die every year ([video link](#))
- TB can be treated and cured
- Investing in ending TB returns US\$43 for every US\$1 spent
- With coordinated investment and commitment at the highest global level we can meet our targets

Canada is a leader on the world’s stage and is one of the 193 UN member nations that can decide the direction and fate of the UN HLM on TB. **By sending the Prime Minister and key Ministers, Canada will help encourage global leadership, and ensure that we get strong commitments from decision-makers**—those who shape budgets, policy, and strategy. We need to demand that our global leaders stand up for a TB-free world.

We will help turn the world **RED** on World TB Day to shine a light on the global fight against TB. With monuments and landmarks in our cities lit, we stand in solidarity with the survivors and affected communities, and push our global leaders to do the same.

Canada in the global fight to end TB:

- A top donor to [Global Fund](#) to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, hosting the 5<sup>th</sup> Replenishment Conference in Sept. 2016
- Primary funder of the [TB REACH](#) program to finding millions of missing TB cases
- Supports excellent [research institutions](#) to find new and better ways to diagnose, treat, and care for TB patients

### Take Action

1. **Participate in the World TB Day “Turn the world red” campaign.** Take a picture of the monument or landmark in your city on World TB Day as it’s lit up in red – or better yet, head down there and snap a pic! Then tweet it out or send to RESULTS Canada and we’ll share it! Don’t have a red monument in your city? Get creative! Dress in red, wear red hats, [print a sign](#), and take a pic with your family, friends, or group.
  - Tuberculosis is the #1 infectious killer in the world – but is curable! We need #Leaders to help create a TB free world. @JustinTrudeau will you #MakeHistory @UN High-Level Meeting on TB in Sept? #WorldTBDay2018
  - In 2016 tuberculosis killed 1.7 million people. [*@monument/landmark in your city*] I stand with the people affected by tuberculosis and am committed to #EndTB. #WorldTBDay2018
2. **Get your MP to participate in the “Turn the world red” campaign** and ask them to join you or, take and share a pic of the monuments in your city when they’re lit up.
3. **Write a letter to the editor or an op-ed** about the need for global political leaders to take on TB, including Prime Minister Trudeau. By announcing his attendance the HLM on TB in September at the UN, he will encourage other world leaders to do the same.
4. **Join the webinar series** to learn more. RESULTS Canada is partnering with the Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development to build Canadian awareness and support for the HLM on TB.
  - March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1-2pm (EST): TB, HIV and the HLM Register [HERE](#)
  - April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1-2pm (EST): TB, Gender and the HLM Stay tuned for details

<sup>1</sup> WHO 2017 *Global TB Report 2017* [http://www.who.int/tb/publications/global\\_report/en/](http://www.who.int/tb/publications/global_report/en/)

<sup>2</sup> In 2016, 626,000 people died of AIDS-related causes (excluding 374,000 TB deaths among HIV-positive people) (<http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/fact-sheet>). The same year, malaria killed 429,000 people (<http://www.who.int/malaria/media/world-malaria-report-2016/en/>).

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the High-Level Meeting on TB see: [http://www.tbcoalition.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/TBEC-Paper-EN\\_final.pdf](http://www.tbcoalition.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/TBEC-Paper-EN_final.pdf)