

# Drug-resistant TB may spread fast

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The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria said on Monday that strains of tuberculosis with resistance to multiple drugs could spread widely. The International health agencies also highlighted an annual need of at least US\$ 1.6 billion in international

funding for treatment and prevention of the disease.

The WHO said that if fully funded, by 2016 over 90% of TB patients estimated to have MDR-TB will be detected and provided treatment in seven high-MDR-TB burden countries including India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Philippines, Ukraine and South Africa.

Based on current spending patterns the biggest

funding gaps are projected for MDR-TB treatment. WHO estimates that if the funding gap is filled it could enable full treatment for 17 million TB and MDR-TB patients and save 6 million lives over three years. Dr Margaret Chan, director-general of WHO, and Dr Mark Dybul, executive director of the Global Fund, said that the only way to carry out the urgent work of identifying all new cases

of tuberculosis, while simultaneously making progress against the most serious existing cases, will be to mobilize significant funding from domestic sources and global donors.

"We are treading water at a time when we desperately need to scale up our response to MDR-TB," said Dr Chan. "We have gained a lot of ground in TB control through international collaboration."