Opening ceremony running order and script /speeches

Wednesday 30th October 2019, 17:30 – 19:30

Honourable Vice President, Honourable Governor, Honourable ministers, Honourable members of parliament, distinguished members of The Union, ladies and gentlemen…

It is a tremendous privilege for me to welcome you to the 50th Union World Conference on Lung Health. This is truly an auspicious occasion.

First of all, may I humbly express our deep gratitude that we are joined today by the Hon’ble Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, who graciously accepted our invitation to be Chief Guest and to inaugurate our conference.

Not only that, we are graced by the presence of the Honourable Governor of Telangana, Dr. Tamilisai Soundrarajan. Also Honourable Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare, Shri Ashwani Kumar Choubey; Hon’ble Minister, Medical & Health and Family Welfare, Sri Etela Rajendra. Also Chief Secretary, Government of Telangana Shri Shailendra Kumar Joshi and President of the Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Shri M. Venkateshwarlu.

This conference is the 50th World Conference organised by The Union since its founding in 1920. This is a testimony to the sustained commitment of our members and supporters to working together to address the greatest public health challenges of our time. All of us in this hall today - scientists, researchers, doctors and nurses, governments, international agencies, advocates and civil society - are coming together as one Union. Our common purpose is to end the scourge of tuberculosis and lung disease which kill millions and cause untold needless suffering.

Our theme this year is Ending the Emergency: Science, Leadership, Action. Coming from 130 countries worldwide, we are gathered together here in Hyderabad to share the evidence, expertise, experience and enthusiasm that are needed to eradicate tuberculosis and lung
disease all over the world. We need to turn political commitment into action. We need to
develop the tools and technical resources to ensure that ambitious targets are met.

_India at the forefront_

It is therefore most fitting that we are meeting here in India, for the first time in over 50 years.
This great country is at the very forefront of the battle against tuberculosis. The Indian
government – led by the Prime Minister - has made the fight against TB a central priority and
boldly pledged to end TB by 2025, five years ahead of the official United Nations target set for
2030.

Even more impressively, you have backed this pledge with very substantial budgets –around
1.7 billion dollars for the National TB Strategy, a joined up initiative at Union and State levels.

One of the most exciting things I read this year was the India TB Report 2019, published in June
by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

This clearly shows the huge strides India is now making in TB control, engaging private sector,
communities and all stakeholders in technological innovation to ensure improved access to
effective detection, diagnosis and treatment.

This government has also increased investment in research, development and data science.
The Indian Council for Medical Research is now among the top four largest funders for TB
research globally, and the national TB control programme has made big progress in active case
finding, drug resistance surveys, and nutritional support for patients. Next year we look forward
to the results of the national prevalence survey now underway.

_The Union in India_
I am proud that The Union is part of this great initiative, and many of my colleagues and members based here in India work closely with the government in technical assistance, implementation and stakeholder engagement.

Challenge TB India, led by The Union with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and funded by USAID, has brought together key stakeholders from health, government, the private sector, civil society and media to drive a ‘Call to Action for TB Free India’, and advocate for the National Strategic Plan.

Since 2013, Project Axshya, led by The Union and funded by the Global Fund, has enabled the identification and testing of 2 million people in 128 districts across India. It has improved access to TB care and support, reaching people who are the most marginalised in society. Our volunteers and partners have helped more than 150,000 patients to receive a diagnosis and begin treatment. It is this painstaking work among the poorest and most vulnerable that is the front line in our joint effort to end the epidemic. It is no easy task.

Reflecting on impact

I have been a TB doctor for a very long time. From working in my community practice in Kenya, to working on policy and advising on technical issues at the global level, I have enjoyed a long and varied career.

It has been a great honour to serve as The Union’s president these past two years. And above all, I continue to be amazed by the passion, the commitment and the positive impact that the people who make up The Union have.

Impact is a term beloved of funders, but it is not always easy to measure. This was well expressed recently by our head of Project Axshya, Mr Subrat Mohanty, and I hope he won’t mind if I quote him: “We can measure our impact in much of the work we do. But in terms of the lives that we save, our impact is immeasurable.”
Thank you and a very warm welcome to you all.

Dr Chakaya Muhwa closing remarks

Welcome to the second half of our Opening Ceremony!

As The Union prepares to celebrate its Centenary, we find ourselves at a turning point in the fight against tuberculosis and lung disease. We’re working on new ways to prevent TB in children. New ways to reduce deaths by providing entire households with medical care at once. And new ways to treat drug-resistant TB.

Yesterday, we announced the results of a promising vaccine trial, and we look forward to more exciting announcements over the next few days of this Conference.

At the same time, new challenges are emerging that are forcing us to be more creative and more effective than we’ve ever been before. Challenges brought by the tobacco industry, air pollution and climate change.

As we look to the future, we see opportunities to achieve new breakthroughs that were impossible to achieve in the past.
And it is us – all of us in this hall – who can make the difference. Together, we have the expertise and the will to end this emergency. But we also need to reach out and engage beyond our traditional communities. We need activists and we need actors who can communicate with a much wider audience and mobilise support.

It is now my great pleasure to introduce our next speaker, Ms Claire Forlani, who has recently become a Union Ambassador. Claire is a well-known film and TV actress who has appeared in more than 50 films and TV series. She was inspired by hearing about our cause to freely give her support to the work of The Union. Please join me in giving her a warm welcome. Claire Forlani...

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WHEN DR TEDROS’ VIDEO FINISHES:

Dr Chakaya Muhwa

We are honoured to have received this message from Dr Tedros and before I welcome our keynote speaker also from the World Health Organization, I would also like to thank Nandita, for
such powerful, expressive words and dance. Thank you also to civil society colleagues for your passionate intervention; you have very much made your point and everyone in this hall has heard you.

Now it gives me great pleasure to introduce our keynote speaker, who I am sure is well known to most of us. Dr Ren Minghui, Assistant Director-General, Universal Health Coverage / Communicable and Noncommunicable Diseases.

Dr Ren has led on communicable diseases at WHO since 2016. He was previously Director-General for International Cooperation in the National Health and Family Planning Commission of the People’s Republic of China, and has a distinguished 30-year career focused on health policy and health reform.

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<td>Presents scientific highlights and introduces Kochon Foundation</td>
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<td>Dr Lucica Ditiu (Executive Director, Stop TB Partnership), Mr Doohyun Kim (Chairman, Kochon Foundation), Mr Allan Maleche (Awardee)</td>
<td>Award presentation by Kochon Foundation followed by announcement of 2020 World TB Day theme</td>
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ONCE KOCHON FOUNDATION AND LUCICA HAVE LEFT THE STAGE:
As our ceremony now draws to a close, I would like to thank you all for being here with us in Hyderabad and I wish you all a productive and enjoyable few days at the conference. I am pleased to invite you all to proceed to the Welcome Reception which will take place after the following *Colours of India* dance.

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